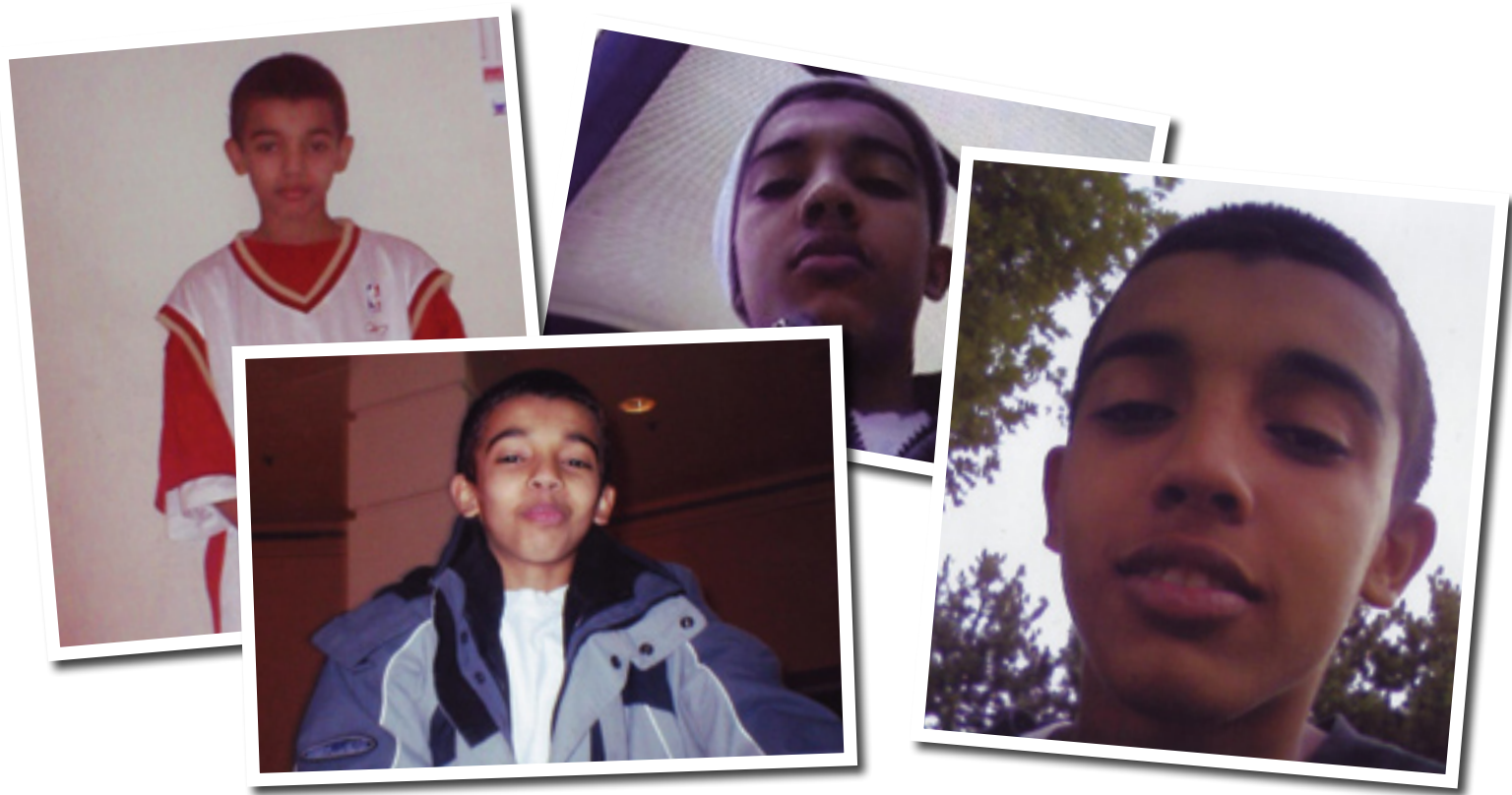
A close-up portrait of a young woman with dark hair, smiling slightly, wearing a dark hooded garment. The image is the background for the entire page.

CATCH DA FLAVA

Regent Park's News Magazine
Winter '09 Issue

IN MEMORY OF
ALWY AL NADHIR
1989 - 2007



IN MEMORY OF ALWY AL NADHIR

Who died on Halloween night of 2007 in St. Michael's Hospital from a bullet wound following an altercation with two police officers in Riverdale Park

INTRODUCTION	14	DEAR OFFICER	17
GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN	15	WHO POLICES THE POLICE?	18
JUSTICE FOR ALWY	16	DEALING WITH DEATH	19
I NEED YOU	17	A HISTORY OF SILENCE	20



REGENT PARK FOCUS
YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE

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.

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

NEXT DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS IS: April 15, 2009

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 **FOCUSFLAVA@GMAIL.COM**

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Distributed to 85 community sites in downtown Toronto

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IS REGENT PARK AT REST?	4
THE WORLD'S MOST SAMPLED DRUMMER	7
A LAND OF ONE'S OWN	8
A MORE PERFECT UNION	9
GAZA CONFLICT	10
DRUG AWARENESS WEEK	22
REDEVELOPMENT PANEL	24
THE NEW GIRL	28
COMMUNITY SNAPSHOTS	30
YOUTH SYMPOSIUM	31



THE REGENT PARK FOCUS YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE is committed to using community-based media to promote health and engage youth. Regent Park Focus is home to: Catch da Flava Print & Online Youth magazine, Catch da Flava Youth Radio on CKLN 88.1 FM, Regent Park TV, The Zapparoli Studio for Photography, The Underground Music Recording Studio, The Diva's Girl's Group, The Focus Drum Corps, The Yoga Den & much more

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IS REGENT PARK AT REST?

By ABDULKARIM MUHASEEN

Are you sleep-deprived? How might you know? Well, experts state the following as symptoms of sleep deprivation - difficulty waking up in the mornings, oversleeping on the weekend, having difficulty remembering or concentrating, waking up often, having trouble going back to sleep, and falling asleep during the day.

How much sleep is needed and what is stopping us from getting that amount? Studies state that teenagers generally require around 8-10 hours of sleep everyday. When I surveyed 62 of my fellow high school students, a whopping 74 % of them stated that they did not get, on average at least 8-10 hours of sleep during week nights. Among these sleep-deprived students, 58% of them claimed that homework was the biggest factor in decreasing their amount of daily sleep.

Amir a grade 12 student at Jarvis Collegiate Institute stated that homework compelled him to stay up, and when asked about the effect it has on his health, said confidently, "You got to do what you got to do". Saara Muhaseen, a grade 10 student also agreed that the only thing keeping her awake was homework. When asked about sleep affecting her health she said, "I don't think it'll really affect my health, and plus, homework shows in the end, while lack of sleep doesn't."

Even though homework seems to be one of the predominate



reasons for teenager sleep deprivation, it is mostly a situation that only occurs as a result of procrastination. Often computer games, television and other pastimes result in us postponing important school work. Iqbal Abdumuneem, a grade 12 student residing in Regent Park admitted that television and internet were the main causes of his lack of sleep. Another grade 11 student, who didn't want to be named, stated that playing computer games forced him to spend late night hours finishing up homework.



Here are some tips and tricks to help with getting plenty of sleep. If it is procrastination that is the problem, then make sure you complete each school assignment before it accumulates. This will keep you clear of dealing with piles of homework late at night. If homework is still robbing you of precious sleep, do extra homework on weekends. This is a trick that can lessen the burden of work on week days, get you ahead of the game, and ultimately lead to added sleep hours. In terms of sleep habits you should avoid different hours of sleep on weekends and weekdays. When your body gets used to a system it will work more efficiently. Each individual usually has a unique amount of sleep time that their body needs in order to be fresh and rested. Try experimenting with different times of sleep and then see what best works for you. While some people may only need seven hours of sleep others may require more. Discovering how much sleep you need, and sticking to that amount will help your body get sufficient rest.



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LOCAL ARTIST THE VOYCE

The Voyce has been a long time coming. After spending several years maturing on the underground music circuit and within the community sector he has finally surfaced on the commercial scene.

An immigrant from the Caribbean Island of St. Lucia, Mario ‘The-Voyce’ Murray’s door to Hip Hop was opened in the early 90s when while the rest of his country was listening to dance hall riddims and ‘iron and pan’ he discovered Tupac Shakur, Snoop Dog, Nas, Wu Tang Clan and more.

Fast forward to 1998 and a music room at Danforth Technical Institute where a quiet new student’s only solace and companionship was in ‘reciting’ words over the reggae rhythms of a then relatively unknown singer ‘Negus Sinclair’ son of Brantford Sinclair a legend in the Toronto Reggae Scene.

This solace would quickly transform to confidence and then full blown ambition to pursue a music a career as ‘4zion’ a collective made up of The Voyce and Negus along with bridge master Raoul ‘Mecca’ Britton and RnB singer/rapper Sean ‘G.LACE’ Banjo.

The collective, however, would not last and after only one Ep (4Z) the politics, egos and life obstacles that haunt many crews would also get the best of this one.

Dreams of stardom and glory were replaced with envious salutes to artists ‘doing their thing’ and commitments to school and day jobs for all but one of the members. The Voyce held fast in his heart and mind that music was his mission. But no soldier finishes his mission without full training and field experience, so The Voyce had to learn to tranform his hot 16s into full songs with hooks, choruses, subject matter and swagger.

Toronto’s backyard barbeques, bars, socialist movements, corporate events, underground music venues and independent promoters were his training grounds. These and the mentorship of Award Winning Reggae Singer ‘Casper’ took TheVoyce’s life philosophies, and songwriting, performing and recording skills to the next level.

Now he’s ready to show and prove and has been frequenting Hip Hop spots like Suba and Sensual Lounge, hooking up with District Six Music and collaborating with Realistic Go Getters and Rochester aka Juice on several new projects. According to The Voyce, ‘The Only thing left is to get the city’s mind Right.’

For more on The Voyce including discography, video, international and exclusive moves visit www.myspace.com/thevoyce



THE WORLD’S MOST SAMPLED DRUMMER

By Roy Morency

In 1965 during a Sunday jam session in a little club in Georgia, Alabama the godfather of soul, James Brown, stumbled across a young African American, drumming genius named Clyde Stubblefield. At 22 years of age, virtually unknown little did he know he was about to embark on an adventure that would ultimately influence the way future drummers played and grooved for the rest of time.



Born in 1943, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Clyde Stubblefield started his musical career playing on tin can lids, pasteboard boxes and anything else in striking distance. By the age of 15 he had his own band and was performing in the local music scene, mostly at private parties and in whiskey joints in the edge of town. In 1965 Clyde joined another band and moved to Georgia. There he never missed the Sunday night jam sessions held at one of the local clubs. That’s where James Brown walked in and heard Clyde Stubble field drumming.

From 1965 to 1975, Stubblefield along with fellow drummer

John (Jabo) Starks helped create the James Brown groove and crown him the godfather of soul. Renowned for its unusual accented note that starts on the one, Stubblefield’s groove influenced many up and coming hip-hop and rap artists. Artists such as DJ Jazzy Jeff and Rob Bass, Public Enemy, Fine Young Cannibals, and Sinead O’Connor, to name a few, sampled the grooves of Stubblefield, ultimately guaranteeing him a place in history

as the world’s most sampled drummer. Amazingly, Clyde’s most sampled works are hits from 43 years ago. Hits such as Popcorn, Say it Loud, I’m black and I’m Proud, I Got the Feeling, and Funky Drummer are still used in present day format for sampling by DJ’s such as Fat Boy slim.

Fundamentally, Clyde’s hip-hop grooves are still the main heartbeat that supply the blood flow to todays hit Rap songs. Clyde’s off the cuff statement “Preparing food and playing drums are similar, because both need the same ingredient, soul,” displays this drummer’s originality. Proving that the beat man still got it, at the young age of 65, Clyde still lays down the hip-hop groove every weekend in his home town of Madison, Wisconsin. As the most sampled drummer in the world, he seems quite humble about his timeless impact regarding the music of today...

As a drummer myself, it is my opinion that Clyde Stubblefield is the greatest drummer of all time; not only because he was the funkiest, the most talented, or the most sampled, but because he had the courage to play for a singer such as James Brown, who was notorious for his mistreatment of band members. A powerful leader such as Brown would have intimidated and embarrassed any of today’s talented drummers, yet for Clyde, it was his soul, his groove, and his hip-hop style that kept him on solid ground with James. As a young boy, I had danced to the groove of James Brown, without ever knowing who the drummer was. In fact, it was only af-

ter many years of incorporating the sound of James Brown into my own drumming, that I learned the name behind the groove. This young man from Chattanooga, Tennessee, playing on pots and pans and listening to the washing machine for the backbeat groove, has inherently touched us all. Clyde’s great style of drumming was not only inspirational for drummers and singers but also inspirational for those who just enjoy dancing and listening to the groove of music.

A LAND OF ONE'S OWN

BY LONYA BURTON

My name is Lonya and I'm going to talk about the founding of Israel. This is a complicated issue, and I think there are many sides to it. In my talk I am going to try to make some connections between Jews, Palestinians and First Nations people in Canada, all of whom have had either their culture or their land taken from them at different times in history.



country.

I think there are lots of reasons that the Jews wanted a homeland, and one might be that after the Holocaust people felt unsafe and they wanted a place that was theirs. Six million Jews (including one and a half million children) were killed in the Holocaust. That was one-third of the entire Jewish population of the world. My great grandmother and her immediate family came to the United States in 1922 before the Second World War – but all of her extended family stayed in Europe and were killed in the Holocaust.

Given this history, it's easy to understand why a Jewish state was needed and felt so important to so many people.

The logic of choosing Palestine as a possible Jewish state was that historically Jews have lived there so it made sense. What did not make sense was that at the time there were almost a million and a half Arabs living in Palestine. This meant that there was bound to be conflict. For the Arabs it was like taking their

land and giving it to someone else. I think it's important to try and imagine how you would feel if that happened to you and your country.

While I've been working on this talk, I have learned about a Jewish Israeli organization called Zoch-rot. The word Zoch-rot comes from the word 'remembering' or 'to remember' in Hebrew. The Zoch-rot organization tries to tell other Israeli Jews about the Arab and Palestinian perspective of the founding of Israel. While Jews call May 14th, 1948 Independence Day, Arabs know it as The Nakba, which means disaster, catastrophe, or cataclysm. Zoch-rot believes that there will never be peace in Israel until everyone understands both perspectives.

I read about a member of the Zoch-rot organization who says he got interested in Zoch-rot by thinking about who used to live on the land where he grew up in Israel. He grew up in a neighborhood in Tel Aviv called Kfar Shalem, which used to be the Arab town of Salame before 1948. This person's experience is what made me want to think about the similarities between the experiences of the Palestinians in Israel, and the problems that happened in my home, Canada, with the European pioneers and the Canadian First Nations people.

In World War II Jews faced the Holocaust, but long before the Jewish Holocaust there was a similar experience that happened to the First Nations People here in Canada. There were Residential schools that were like concentration camps had the intent of destroying a culture. Residential schools were the places that the Europeans would put First Nations children, who they kidnapped from their villages, to make them Christian. In these schools they would not be able to speak their own language or practice their own religion or else they would be tortured. These kinds of things happened to Jews in the Holocaust and throughout history.

Since the children in the Residential schools were very young and they could not speak their language or practice their religion, they forgot both of those things. So when they eventually got home they could not communicate with their families, and also when they had children of their own, they taught them English or French and Christianity rather than their own languages and religions. In both cases, the Holocaust and the Residential schools, the intention was to destroy a culture. Many Jews and Aboriginal people were killed in this process.

Though the similarity between the Jews and the First Nations people in the attempted destruction of their culture, there is another important, but different connection we can make between First Nations people and the Palestinians, which is that both of these groups had their land stolen from them. Today, both groups (First Nations and Palestinians) live in segregated

Continued on page 26

A MORE PERFECT UNION

BY IKORO HUGGINS-WARNER

During the Democratic primaries it came out that Barack Obama had connections with the controversial Reverend Jeremiah Wright. Reverend Wright was known for the numerous occasions when he spoke candidly about race in America. He talked plainly and openly about white privilege and government bureaucracy. Hilary Clinton's campaign, Republican officials, and other American pundits put enormous effort into associating Barack Obama with Reverend Wright (who they saw as a negative figure), with the intention of stopping his run for the democratic nomination.

At the height of the controversy, in Philadelphia, on March 18th, 2008, Barack Obama addressed the nation. His campaign had been on the defensive for the last couple days but out of his sleeves Obama produced a speech that will be remembered in history, a speech called "A More Perfect Union."

He began by quoting the forefathers of America's independence "We the people, in order to form a more perfect union," and went on to reflect that "Two hundred and twenty one years ago, in a hall that still stands across the street, a group of men gathered and, with these simple words, launched

America's improbable experiment in democracy." Barack Obama speaks with an elegance unmatched in the political arena. He speaks with rhetoric that our generation has never seen, rhetoric that can be compared to the likes of Kennedy and Dr. King. Barack Obama goes on to speak about the constitution, and the rights ensured under that document. But more importantly he understands and speaks about the limits of the constitution. He notes "...words on a parchment would not be enough to deliver slaves from bondage, or provide men and women of every color and creed their full rights and obligations as citizens of the United States."

Obama then comes to the crux of what this speech was meant to address: Race in America. He starts by pointing out that even though he won "...commanding victories in states with some of the whitest populations in the country...the press has scoured every exit poll for the latest evidence of racial polarization..." Personally I can't count the number of times I have heard American pundits on CCN assume that black voters are only voting for Barack Obama because he is black. God forbid black voters may be voting for Barack Obama on the basis of his policies and not solely because of his skin color.



At this point in the speech, Obama turns to the matter of Reverend Wright. Here is what he said "... [Reverend Wright] expressed a profoundly distorted view of this country - a view that sees white racism as endemic, and that elevates what is wrong with America above all that we know is right with America..." Obama also said "...As such, Reverend Wright's comments were not only wrong but divisive, divisive at a time when we need unity; racially charged at a time when we need to come together to solve a set of monumental problems..."

I was disappointed by the lackluster response by Barack Obama. Although the rhetoric of the above sentences is brilliant, the stance taken is unfortunate. This controversy gave Barack Obama the opportunity to start an honest conversation about race in America. He could have sparked a conversation that up to this point had never been talked about. Instead Obama took the easy way out, the politician's way out. He distanced himself from Reverend Wright without taking advantage of examining the real and hard questions raised by his speech.

In his speech, Obama also said "We are facing two wars, a terrorist threat,

a falling economy, a chronic health care crisis and potentially devastating climate change; problems that are neither black or white or Latino or Asian, but rather problems that confront us all." This statement disappointed me because it erased race in America by implying that issues like "a falling economy" effect single black moms, and white well off men exactly the same. In reality, the black community is on the whole substantially poorer than whites in America, so obviously the falling economy will affect blacks and whites substantially differently.

However, in the rest of the speech Obama goes on to speak accurately about the complexities of race in America. He talked about race in schools, race in the workplace, and race in politics. So although I was disappointed by some of the responses Obama put forward, on the whole I was impressed by the speech. Impressed because not only am I proud to see a positive black role model like Obama capture the stage of American politics, but proud also because it is refreshing to see a politician who knows that changes need to be made in America "...to form a more perfect union."

GAZA CONFLICT

By ABDULKARIM MUHASEEN

During the recent Gaza invasion, news networks reported that at least half of the 1000 deceased were children and women. But it seems as if these figures gradually evaporated from the public view after Israel announced the much-awaited cease-fire. However the issue of Israel killing so many civilians during their invasion has yet to be properly addressed.

The Israeli government continuously blamed the hundreds of civilian deaths on supposed Hamas fighters hiding behind civilians and using them as human shields. Yet, numerous relief agencies continued to condemn the Israeli attacks as war crimes, citing the unprovoked shelling of UN headquarters, schools and aid workers as proof. Media buildings like the Abu Dhabi Television headquarters and the offices of the Associated Press had also been attacked with bullets and shells. Ironically during the two week occupation, even foreign media was banned in Gaza by Israel. In one case, after receiving considerable flak, Israel conducted an investigation into their shelling of a UN school. Israeli officials eventually concluded that the incident was in fact an 'accident'. Israel stated that their missile was originally aimed at militants. Unfortunately it had misfired. During the invasion, the UN's most senior human rights official stated that the Israeli military might have committed war crimes in Gaza. Nzzavi Pillay, the UN high commissioner for human rights mentioned in particular, one incident of the shelling of a house filled with 110 civilians. The civilians, he said, had taken refuge in the house on the direction of Israeli troops and yet they were still fired on. 30 civilians were killed as a result of that attack.



Proof after proof emerges of the heedlessness of Israel. In their 60 years of existence, the state of Israel has violated more than 68 U.N resolutions.


People often think the topic of civilian death in Gaza, is a matter of bias, whether one supports Israel or the Palestinian people, but as facts emerge, it becomes increasingly harder for people to deny Israel's blatant actions. They've been accused of targeting civilians by the Red Cross and the UN relief agency, among many other non-partisan relief organizations. Numerous aid workers were reported to have been heavily restricted and hindered from carrying out assistance for the wounded and dead in the midst of the Israeli strikes.

As Israel announces the cease-fire, Israel is diplomatically applauded by other nations. This makes it seem as if Israel is suddenly absolved of their actions. However, on top of the fact that it took so long for them to halt their destruction, the bigger question still remains – When will Israel be held accountable for their war crimes?



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REGENT PARK FOCUS YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE

A MESSAGE FROM REGENT PARK FOCUS YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE

IN CONVERSATION WITH ADAM GIOMBRONI

BY SALMA AL-NADHIR & DEBORAH ORUGANI



Adam Giombroni is City Councillor of Ward 18 Davenport and Chair of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC). Catch da Flava's Salma Al-Nadhir and Deborah Orugani had the chance to sit with Adam and ask him some questions about the TTC.

Flava: Can you just tell us a little bit about what kind of work you do?

Adam: I am a Toronto city councilor and my main job is acting as chair of the TTC which runs all the buses, streetcars, and subways here in the city. My job is to over see the operation but also to consider how we are going to improve the system in the future.

Flava: The price of TTC tickets keeps going up. Can you talk about that and why the price keeps increasing?

Adam: If you look at the last 30 years it's true that the cost of the TTC has risen faster and higher than inflation. The main reason for this is a lack of sustained provincial and federal funding for the TTC. The TTC gets money from two sources, the riders pay about 75% of the operating cost, and the other 25% comes from the governments, the municipal which provides by far the most, the province and the feds. If the government provided enough money we wouldn't have to ask for as much from the riders. Since the government doesn't provide us enough funding we are forced to either cut back the service, which is a problem because we have a lot of people who depend on the TTC, or to raise our fares. So that's why over the last 30 years the average price of TTC has gone up about 350% while the average price of other things have only gone up 150% or 160%.

Flava: Wow, that's a huge difference!

Adam: Absolutely and amidst all these financial constraints we're also trying to grow the TTC. For instance, this October we will add 130 new buses so they are not as crowded. We've also

extended bus routes from 6am to 2am as opposed to now when some of them shut down at 9 o'clock. We've also had to struggle with increasing fuel costs. All of this results in major cost increases, about \$130 million that will have to come from somewhere. The government will probably put in some more money but it is likely there will be another fair increase to cover the shortfall.

Flava: Why are the adult tickets being replaced with only tokens?

Adam: Our problem today is that there are a lot of counterfeit tickets floating around and if we don't act it will cost us somewhere around \$6 billion dollars a year. In contrast, no one has figured out how to counterfeit the new tokens, especially since they are run through a scanner at subway stations. We will likely be outfitting buses and streetcars so they scan tokens as well. In the long run the TTC is working to bring in an electronic fare card that allows you to go on the Internet or to a machine to load on as much money as you want. Then everytime you enter the TTC it will automatically deduct your fare. This will likely come by 2012.

Flava: The fare card sounds like a good idea. Did you guys actually arrest anyone for the counterfeit tickets?

Adam: Yes, in fact we've made a number of arrests in the last couple of years. We've also arrested people for counterfeit metro passes. We have Special Constables and undercover officers that help us with this. They make about 3000 arrests a year for people who don't pay their fare.

Flava: A lot of youth have problems getting kicked off the TTC mostly because they don't have a student card even though they are students. Why is it necessary to have the student cards?

Adam: There are two reasons why. One of them is that the student fare is only available for city of Toronto residents since they are the ones who pay for the TTC through their taxes. Why should Toronto residents subsidize young people from Mississauga, Pickering, and York region? Their own municipal governments should look out for them and the reality is we don't have the money to subsidize them. The second reason is that while the drivers won't always check for student cards, they need to be able to in cases where they aren't sure if the person is a student or not. You don't want an operator to have to use their own judgment and guess a person's age, you want a system that's fair to everyone and treats everyone equally. If every student has their card ready to show TTC operators, we can achieve this fairness.

Flava: Many drivers don't wait for you even though they see you running for the bus. Shouldn't there be a rule that they have to

wait for the rider that's coming?

Adam: A lot of our buses operate on a tight schedule, especially during rush hour. To give you an example, let's say the bus comes every 5 minutes, well every time it's delayed just 20 seconds, the whole schedule gets thrown out of whack and you end up with situations where 2 buses end up running together and now the next people have to wait 10 minutes for the next bus. I would hope that on a Sunday or on a less busy route like one where the bus comes every half hour, that the drivers are much more willing to wait for passengers because 20 seconds in 30 minutes is not a lot. But I do know it can be frustrating. I've never owned a car, so I always use the TTC, and just this morning I ran for the Avenue Road bus and missed it by 5 seconds!

Flava: A lot of people experience rude drivers, is there a proper way to report them?

Adam: First of all, I want to say that the TTC is dedicated to hiring and training drivers who have great customer service skills. We used to just focus more on the driving skills, like we hired



a lot of ex-truck drivers, but now we care a lot about their people skills. In addition, we're making a big push to hire drivers with diverse backgrounds, so that the people working for the TTC reflect the multicultural Toronto residents they are serving. We are hiring

about 800 new drivers a year, so hopefully this new customer service attitude will begin to filter down and be felt. However, if you do have a problem you should always take note of the bus number, which is on the inside and outside of all TTC vehicles. Also you should note down the time, and what route you were on. You don't have to get the name of the driver and you don't have to be confrontational. You can then email the TTC. We do follow up and while one complaint may not lead to action, if we see a pattern where 5 or 6 other people are writing with similar complaints, we will speak to the driver and in some cases give reprimands.

Flava: There are some other countries that have really strong public transit systems like London, Spain and New York. Aside from what we've already talked about, is there anything else the TTC is doing to improve service for its riders?

Adam: When you look around the world there are some major cities that have large systems because they are so populated. For example, there are 25 million people in New York and just 5.5

million in the Toronto area. So we have to be somewhat realistic about the size of the system we need. We are already the 3rd largest system in North America. First is Mexico city, New York is second, and Toronto is third. Still, we are always working on expansion and improvement. I've already mentioned the new buses we've added and there are new subway trains coming in the next year. Starting in 2012 the subways will be run by a computer rather than a driver. We're also renovating several TTC stations over the coming years and adding new streetcars. There is a lot happening in transit right now

Flava: We have recently has some scary incidents on the TTC, including shootings and people being pushed in front of subways. What is the T.T.C. doing to ensure the safety of riders?

Adam: Security is a primary issue for us. By the end of 2009 there will be cameras in every subway station, bus and streetcar, so that if crimes happen, we can have a better chance of catching perpetrators. Also, hopefully people won't commit the crimes in the first place because they know the cameras are watching. We've added more special constables, which are the TTC police who have the same power as the Toronto police. Finally, we continue to modify designs so that stations are safer both in terms of visibility and tripping and falling hazards.

Flava: There were rumors not that long ago that there might be another strike. Is that possible?

Adam: It's hard to say never but I can tell you that the provincial government recently had a rare Sunday session and debated for about only half an hour and passed a law whereby if the TTC continues a strike after they've been ordered back to work they would be fined \$2000-\$3000 daily and their members could face time in jail. So the consequences are pretty severe at this point.

Flava: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us Adam.

MEMORIAL FOR ALWY AL-NADHIR

Alwy Al-Nadhir was murdered by the Toronto Police on October 31, 2007. After the news of his murder, a group was formed called the Justice for Alwy Campaign Against Police Brutality. The campaign was formed by family, friends and other organizations like the Black Action Defense Committee. Its mission is to demand justice for Alwy and other youths who are brutalized or killed by Toronto police. The group also aims to raise awareness about the problems with the Special Investigation Unit which is made up mostly of former police officers who always seem to come out in favour of their fellow officers and clear them from any wrong doing.

In the case of Alwy Al-Nadhir, after 6 months the Special Investigation Unit (SIU) cleared the police of any wrong doing in the murder of Alwy Al-Nadhir who was just an 18 year old and was unarmed at the time he was shot. The problem of police investigating police in cases of police brutality is one people are struggling with around the world. Just this spring both Greece and Montreal experienced riots because of murders by the Police. It is important to recognize this because youth are still being brutalized in the streets especially in what are so called "high risk areas" like Regent Park which gets the most police attention. Police are even moving from the streets into the schools and we have to make sure no youth are being targetted and abused.



GONE BUT NEVER FORGOTTEN

By SALMA AL-NADHIR

Alwy was shot by police and no eligible reason was given as to why they took him away from many loved ones. He had no weapons, so why was the trigger pulled? Alwy is always remembered by his smile that can never fade from anyone's mind. Why is it that people we are suppose to feel safe around like the police, we instead feel threatened by. To them he was just another person but to me he was my mother's only son, my sister's older brother, my dad's teenage son, my grandmother's grandson. He was a nephew, a cousin a friend, a love, a student, and he was my younger brother that I grew up with, never lived my life without his presence and with a simple click they took all that away from us. We are just another from many families missing the smiles of our loved ones because of their violent actions.

Alwy was always making people smile with his jokes that sometimes weren't even funny but you couldn't help but laugh at them. He was always caring to his family and friends. If you needed anything, and if he had it he would gladly give it. He had a job and was saving money to buy a car and he promised he would drive me around. He was graduating high school and just about to take a big step in his life to pursue becoming a mechanical engineer, because he always loved cars. I remember the cake he bought me on his last birthday with me. I told him how sweet it was and he was so shy all he did was smile. I remember how he would always buy his little sister treats, and how he bought my mom the gold necklace with matching earrings. Alwy you were always so sweet, life has been so different without you. Days seem so much shorter. Everyday, I have to pinch myself back to reality that you are really gone. I went to Riverdale Park where you were at last and I was speechless, I couldn't even cry and when I saw the outline of where you laid down I wanted to scream and call your name hoping you would respond to me. I call your phone but you are always unavailable but I still wait for a reply to the messages I sent on your last night when I told you to "come home, mom is looking for you, she's going crazy." But there's never any answer. I wish I knew what was happening to you. I could have called you before 9:30, said something that may have changed that night. People say it will get easier as days go by but to me everything is harder trying to live my life without you after 18 years. I didn't get a chance to say many things, I just never thought you would be leaving so early. I saw you on your last day but never saw you walk out the door for the last time. When I saw you during the funeral I couldn't believe how rested you looked and how light you got. It looked like you were sleeping and looked like you were trying to say something. I stood there beside you, staring at you while I am crying waiting for you to open up your eyes but it didn't happen. You didn't wake up. I wish I could express the pain I have deep in me. I wish I could express the anger that I have not at God because he want-

ed you to be in a better place but I have anger at the pain they put you through. You laid there by yourself with no one to hold your hand, no one to hear your last words. I'm angry because of the pain they're putting us through. When I cry it's because I am missing you. I know that even though you didn't make it to your high school graduation, you made a bigger graduation to a better place. I had a dream I told you that you were innocent and I knew that from day one. Hopefully Justice will be served. I hope they go through what we are going through. We miss you so much, you are always in my heart no matter where I am and always in my prayers. They killed a part of us with you.

R.I.P Alwy A.K.A Alweezy



JUSTICE FOR ALWY AL NADHIR

By KHADRA

It has been over a year since the shocking and senseless death of Alwy AL Nadhir. On March 1, 2008, the Justice for Alwy Campaign was launched. At the launch, I sat there among the crowd of mourners and activists, wondering what the purpose of the campaign was. For the last few months, I was convinced Alwy's death was in vain and there was nothing to be done.



But at the launch of the Justice for Alwy Campaign, I heard the voices of mothers, fathers, residents, concerned citizens and particularly youth describing their right to seek justice via peaceful means and their sense of hope for the future. I saw a mother who felt the pain of many mothers who have lost children to violence, whether such violence is a result of police shootings or other shootings directly linked to the depressing social, political and economic conditions in which poor racialized youth find themselves. And so, I was reminded of how social justice activism is a painful process, but it is a worthy cause that must not be abandoned even in the face of seemingly impenetrable oppression and injustice. At the meeting, Alwy's mother spoke of her grief, her thoughts of her son as he received the bullet that killed him, the blood gushing from his neck, she wonders, was he in pain, did he call for her? As a community including parents, youth and providers, we have collective responsibilities in supporting this family as they seek solace from their faith, allies and a justice system that rarely holds police officers accountable.

At the campaign launch, I witnessed the resiliency of Alwy's friends, sisters and mother. I witnessed the exercise of power from the bottom up, and the reassertion of alternative and empowering identities and discourses. And so, I was able to speak of my personal memories of Alwy. He was smart, funny, polite, and

he had a promising future ahead of him. I mourned what could have been, but will never be! I spoke of the sickening shock I felt when I heard of Alwy's death. You see, I had known Alwy for three years. And he will forever be part of my lived experiences.

Above all, it was empowering and humbling to see Alwy's friends and sisters quickly take on the role of resisters, educators and activists. In the midst of their indescribable grief, Alwy's sisters are working with allies to raise awareness about community policing within poor and racialized communities. As Alwy's mother said, this campaign will not bring back her son, but it may prevent another mother from feeling the pain that Alwy's family feels. Likewise, this campaign aims to support Alwy's family as they seek to find out why the police felt the need to shoot to kill.

The campaign aims to raise awareness about the unchallenged, yet dehumanizing and dangerous activities of police in communities like Regent Park. However, in addition to questioning police intimidation of youth, the campaign aims to deconstruct the media construction of Alwy as a criminal. When the police kill, must we always assume such shootings are justified? Those who knew Alwy believe his shooting was unnecessary and therefore not justifiable. In essence, the Justice for Alwy Campaign seeks to influence how police shootings are dealt with in this province. We (the public) are led to believe that the special investigation unit (SIU) is a civilian independent body. The SIU is the investigative body called to investigate police contacts that result in injuries or death of civilians; however, the SIU is staffed primarily by former police officers. The hiring of former police officers as civilian investigators calls into question the independence and the very credibility of the SIU. How can we in good consciousness expect former police officers to investigate their peers? Perhaps this is why the SIU rarely charges police officers that cause harm to civilians. So, while the Justice for Alwy Campaign seems to have no illusions about the complexity of our justice system, the campaign will certainly engage us in critical discussions about issues of importance such as community policing and police oversight.

To find out more about the Justice for Alwy campaign visit www.justiceforalwy.ca. It also has a face book group has been set up under the same name. I urge everyone to get engaged. It should be noted the opinions expressed in this letter solely reflect my own. I do not speak for the Justice for Alwy campaign nor any other body.

I NEED YOU

By NAOMI AMANUEL

I'd do anything just tell me how
I miss you but you're in a better place now
you're out of this world where people get shot
shot by the heartless merciless cops
a world where cops they never get caught
still can't believe what happened, my god
cops aren't supposed to shoot to kill
but they don't care, they just do it for the bill
they shouldn't do this
they should be trained
if one of them thinks this and doesn't know how to aim
how do we know all these cops aren't the same

Can't believe I'm never going to hear your voice
why did you have to die
but now you're free with no rules, no stress
so freely may you fly
as for me
the healing process you cannot by
all I have in this life of sin is me myself and I
no more fun in this life alone so to it I say goodbye
told you my secrets and you kept them safe
as if they were in pencil and you erased
told me they were in pencil and you erased
told me you wanted to be a business man, money you loved to make
but I must say I guessed this would be your fate
I told you bout my family
Told me you're the only boy
Told me bout you mom your sisters
Your joys
Told me you didn't like 2 many rules
And you wasn't bout gangs, they are 4 fools
Told me he handles his business, thought that was cool
Wish I went to see him and skip that day of school

Remember that spot? I know I do
The crazy things you talked about, the crazy things I'd do
Today was the first time I went to the spot without you
Sat down where you sat, my tears hit the floor
Called, no answer, cried some more
Someone tell me it's not forever
Someone tell me "him leaving? Never"
Someone tell me he's coming back again
At least, someone tell me what really happened explain
Someone tell me it's all a lie
Someone, anyone tell me why.

DEAR OFFICER...

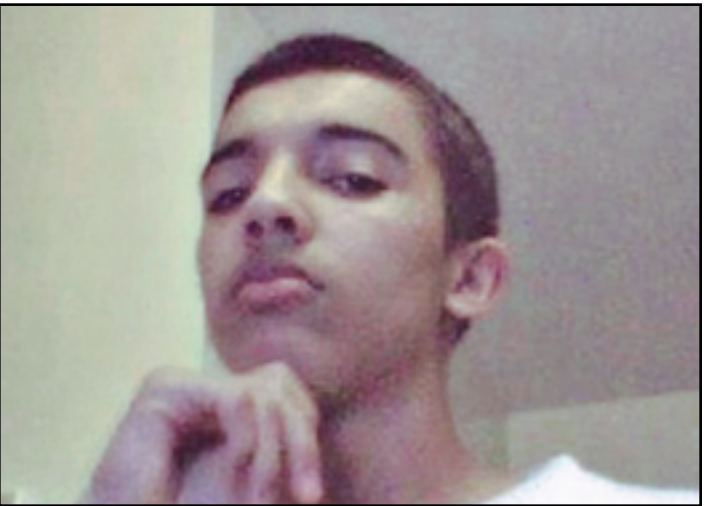
By NAWAL

Dear officer...
For most people Oct 31st is Halloween but for many others it was the worst day of our lives kids dress up and roam the stresses with laughter but no one hears our cries no one feels area hurting no one feels my pain god am I going crazy cus I don't feel sane u aimed a bullet you had a target and just like that you ended something that you never started alwy I cant be strong im weak in every way I cant hold on your gone ur not on a trip ur gone forever and that makes me sick my worlds a mess I just want it to stop please just make this pain go away grade 9 was our year always causing trouble u ahmed and mo k the three new that was our last time I wouldn't of been as happy now remember you always a hug daps didn't cut it for you if only I can hug u one last time I wouldn't let go of you I wouldn't of made fun of ur lisp or your height I would've been your angel id never let u out of my sight I would've watched your every move guard your every step be there for you anytime you needed my help remember in English class u always threw notes at me and id write something stupid and throw it back and we would go back and forth all day because we always had something to say now your dead I cried for so long tears drench my clothes when I sleep I see u when I walk I hear you when I pray I feel you it doesn't feel real I went to your funeral today I watched over your casket and there you lay I just wanted to pick you up and tell you everything is going to be alright but it isn't so I prayed for you brother I prayed for your family specially your mother and then I said my last goodbyes...

Alwy it hurts cause I can't talk to u hope you can hear my tears so I cry for you

Alwy your gone? A part of me died with u

Your friend Nawal



WHO POLICES THE POLICE?

By JODY NYASHA WARNER

Who polices the police? It's a question all democratic societies grapple with long and hard. After all, we give our police huge powers: the right to investigate crime, make arrests, bear arms and even, in extraordinary circumstances, the right to kill. It's crucial that with these significant rights, come significant responsibilities. Citizens need to have faith that the people who police them act with accountability, fairness and justice. Unfortunately this isn't always the case. The police are only human and as such individual officers sometimes make mistakes. In addition, there are systemic problems in police forces. For instance, documentation shows Canadian police often use racial profiling even though this is illegal. And people with mental health issues have long complained about unfair police treatment.



So what does happen when something goes wrong? Well in Ontario we have a body called the Special Investigations Unit, otherwise known as the SIU. The SIU is called in to investigate charges of wrong doing by the police. They are supposed to represent us as citizens, to act as a watchdog to ensure the police are policing us equitably and justly. And, in cases where police have abused their power (eg. excessive force resulting in injury or death) they are supposed to hand down punishments. Sounds like a good set-up right? Well not quite.... People, especially those who have been on the receiving end of harsh police treatment, have long suspected the SIU of not doing its job. The fact that the SIU only rarely finds police officers guilty in cases of police shooting doesn't inspire confidence. When I went to the SIU's website and looked up their current

Report on Cases, all 17 listed either called for a termination of investigation or concluded that there were no reasonable grounds on which to charge police. A 100% no charge rate doesn't inspire confidence either. A few weeks ago these suspicions about the SIU finally got the long overdue public hearing they deserved. On September 30th of this year Andre Martin, the Ombudsman for Ontario, released a scathing report (titled "Oversight Unseen") about the state of the SIU. After reviewing thousands of SIU cases and documents and conducting 100 interviews Martin concluded "There is no doubt in my mind that an SIU investigation is one which is currently done through blue-coloured glasses. There is no doubt that there is a police bias in their approach to investigations." Specific problems Martin pointed out were too many ex-police

officers on SIU staff, critical interviews being delayed for weeks or months and the lack of a computerized case management system so repeat offenders and issues can be identified. Whenever an officer has been involved in a case where serious injury, sexual assault or death is present the SIU is supposed to be immediately contacted but Marin found this is often not the case. Rather he said, "Often police union lawyers are at the scene before the SIU." The SIU was also criticized for holding an excessively low public profile leading to a lack of transparency. All of these things taken together, point to a broken system. Marin notes that "It is clear that something must be done to dispel the SIU's image as a toothless tiger and muzzled watchdog if it is to earn the respect of police officials as well as the public at large."

The question now is will something be done? Marin's report made 46 recommendations but will the Ontario government listen and act? It goes without saying that those families who have, tragically, already lost loved ones due to possible police misconduct will be watching the fall out from this report closely. But all of us as citizens should press the government to address the concerns raised in Marin's report. If you want to help make sure this doesn't fall off the radar consider giving the Ontario Attorney General's office a call (#416-326-2220) and letting them know what you think.

DEALING WITH DEATH

By TRACY CHEN

Death is inevitable. As painful as it is losing a loved one, the experience of losing them through unnatural causes is even worse. The impact of their death affects more than just their families and friends. It also has a profound effect on the atmosphere of their neighbourhood, leaving an especially lasting impression on youth. In communities that have experienced death, safety becomes a concern. According to Janet Wilson of Bereaved Families of Ontario, "People that have experienced grief firsthand are not going out as much because of fear." Young people are especially vulnerable, because they feel as they "might be next." In neighbourhoods that have a high crime rate, this creates an atmosphere of hopelessness. According to Sarah Henderson, Counsellor and Youth Program Coordinator at Bereaved Families of Ontario, in the perspective of a young person, "What is the point of loving/connecting/attaching if he or she will probably be taken away from me?" Death in communities changes how youth relate with others and with themselves.



Youth also have different coping mechanisms than adults in dealing with their pain. Youth have emotions that are closer to the surface and are more reactive than adults. This is due to the fact that adults have more life experience, and therefore, do not react as quickly. Henderson reveals "Teenagers become isolated and alienated after a loss because they don't want to feel different from their peers but the death of a family member or close friend may actually change them." After Wilson worked with a youth whose best friend died she observed that, "He was feeling like he wanted to retaliate, yet he did not have that ability,

hence he resorted to impulsive behaviour and rage. Underneath this was his sadness." Instead of talking about their grief, youth are more prone to feelings of guilt, anger and injustice toward the situation.



Each community heals and grieves in its own way. It is important for communities to unite with each other to commemorate the person who died. This can be done through a garden, a memorial, a public story telling or holding an event in their remembrance. For the immediate family who has been struck by this loss, it is important to them that their loved one is not forgotten. Wilson notes, "Society doesn't know how to deal with death well, ignoring what has happened, yet families want to remember." Wilson and Henderson emphasize that it is important not to isolate families in this particularly trying time, as this is when they need support the most. "Offer care, cooking, sharing of what may seem like overwhelming and impossible responsibilities when families are mourning. Remind them that they will survive this and that just getting through moments and continuing to breathe is enough at the beginning..." "The pain from the loss of a loved one may never heal completely, however with support from their neighbours and friends, families can slowly learn to rebuild their lives again.

Special thanks to Sarah Henderson and Janet Wilson of Bereaved Families of Ontario for providing information to write this article. For more information about Bereaved Families of Ontario contact (416)440-0290 or visit bfotoronto.ca

A HISTORY OF SILENCE

By Tracy Chan

On Wednesday, May 24th, 2008 around 2:30 p.m. officers were called to a school near Keele and Finch Avenue. There they found Jordan Manners, a Grade 9 student at C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute near the school's indoor pool. He was found with a bullet to his chest. He was rushed to Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. There he was pronounced dead. He was 15. Yet he was more than just a student at C.W. Jeffreys. He was a boy who had dreamed of becoming an actor. He was also someone's friend and a mother's only son. More than that, he was a victim of Toronto's school system, who had neglected to protect his right to safety.



One of the problems currently in Toronto's school system is a culture of fear that dictates how crime is dealt with. Teachers and students don't report crime, as they fear reprisal. The young criminals become unafraid of authorities, as they receive no punishment for their heinous deeds. Hence, these crimes repeat themselves, ignored until an incident occurs that cannot be overlooked.

Such an incident was the death of Jordan Manners. Ironically, according to initial reports, C.W. Jeffreys Collegiate Institute was considered a safe school. In an interview right after the shooting, according to Stephanie Payne, a TDSB representative, "There's never been any serious incidence there and this is very upsetting to the school community and staff right now. A lot of staff have been there for a long time and they really love the school." Interestingly, the recent "Safe School Report" illustrated that one of the reasons that Jordan Manners died was because of the cut-backs to the supports for at-risk students. A responsibility that the TDSB doesn't seem to want to acknowledge.

The 1000 page investigation also included other alarming details such as incidents of sexual harassment. Upon closer inspection, 19% of the female students at C.W. Jeffreys said that they had been victims of sexual assault and 29% of female students said that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact (touching and grabbing) in the past two years.

In particular, a female Muslim student reported that six males assaulted her in the bathroom. The report said that the girl had confided in a teacher and they had reported their concern to administration.

However there was no follow-up, according the panel. Her case was simply ignored by the administrators. Better late than never, the six males are now charged with gang sexual assault, forcible confinement and the conspiracy to commit an indictable offense.

This month, the principal and two former vice-principals of C.W. Jefferys will appear in court to face charges under the Ontario Child and Family Services Act that they failed to report an incident contrary to their obligation.

To combat the issues of sexual harassment and violence, the panel suggests a public awareness campaign concerning sexual assault and gender-based violence. In addition, the panel also recommends hiring 20 new full-time social workers, introducing firearm detecting dogs, creating a standing educational justice committee, and revising and broadening the online code of conduct to include acts of cyber violence.

The death of Jordan Manners gives the government a loud and clear warning. To keep schools safe, it is imperative for the government to increase funding for schools for social workers, hall monitors and youth workers. More so the TDSB must create a safer environment so that students and teachers can overcome fear. Stop sweeping the dirt under the rug, and come clean about the crimes in high school so that every student can have the right to be informed and safe.

Thank You REGENT PARK RESIDENTS! FOR JOINING US AT THE DANIELS OPEN HOUSE EVENT!

We hope you enjoyed:

- Being the FIRST to see our New Presentation Centre;
- Meeting with the DANIELS Team working on the revitalization of Regent Park;
- Learning about how you can become involved in the NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM, which will work towards fostering a strong sense of community in the new Regent Park;
- Hearing about the progress of the First Phase of the revitalization.

We certainly enjoyed meeting with all of you.
If you were unable to attend the event and would like more information
please contact us at:

416-955-0559 or info@onecole.ca



Daniels
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DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

By Adonis Huggins

In Ontario, Drug Awareness Week is officially held in the third week of November. Each year, in celebration of this week, Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Center organizes a local Drug Awareness Program in partnership with area schools. The aim of the program is to provide a range of concentrated activities that help inform and educate students on the harms associated with illicit drug use. This year's Drug Awareness Program in Regent Park was held from November 25 to December 12, 2008 in partnership with Lord Dufferin and Spruce Court school.

The Regent Park 2008 Drug Awareness Week program kicked off with a school assembly featuring a showcase of short films on drugs related themes. The films were produced by various youth involved with Regent Park Focus over the years. Immediately following the screening guest speakers from the community were invited to share their experiences with drugs. Caroline Swinson of Mothers Against Drinking and Driving (MADD), talked about the loss of her son who was killed by drunk driver. Eleu Pontes, was raised in a working, single parent family. Eleu talked about not having anyone home to watch over him. At the age of 12 years of age, Eleu found a job running drugs for the local dealers eventually becoming a user and an addict himself. Andrew Galloway talked about his life as a successful businessman. As his companies grew his cocaine use moved from weekend to daily use. Within two years he became addicted to crack and lost his marriage, his house and all his assets. The last speaker Tom Regehr initially turned to alcohol at the age of 15 to help him deal with a mother who had mental health issues. Alcohol became his way of coping with life. Tom talked about his life living homeless on the streets for nearly a decade. The stories of these speakers captivated the students and they had lots of questions to ask.

At the end of the assembly, the Regent Park Focus Director, Adonis Huggins, presented students with the challenge of returning to their classrooms and working together over the next two weeks to create their own posters and decorate their classroom doors on the theme of drugs awareness.

Within a week of the contest announcement, halls ways and doorways at the two schools became enthused with drug prevention posters and messages of all shapes, sizes and colors. Thank you Brenda Bugg (Manager of Rainbow Cinemas – Market Square) and Rainbow Bear for coming out and helping judge the competitions. We would also like to thank Alliance Atlantis Communications Inc. for donating great prizes which consist of DVDs and movie posters!

We would especially like to thank our speakers and the principals, the teachers and every student that participated in the 2008 Drug Awareness Week!

Photos from Drug Awareness Week →

I am here to tell you all what our classroom has been working on during the past two weeks. We have worked really hard on this project for a long time.

Our class made posters, walking posters and many other things. We printed pictures that had to do with drugs and ironed them on to white T-shirts, we all made our own. Our class cooperated through the whole project and worked together through the whole competition. It was a great experience working together as a class.

I learned plenty of things during the Drug Awareness Door Decorating Contest. The main point I understood was if you take drugs you could end up on the streets or in prison. I would definitely never take drugs. I have seen many people on the streets selling and giving drugs to High School students, which is a really bad sign.

To wrap everything up, our class did a good job working in a team. Overall I want to say drugs are bad for you so don't do them. Your friends and family are counting on you to have a good life.

It all depends on you!

-Ajantha A.

In this competition, we learned how to work as a group. We also learned more about drugs and what's good and bad about them. We also experienced putting ourselves into someone else's shoes to see how it feels to be an ex-drug addict. We were being creative by making colourful designs for T-shirts that we made.

We took leadership and set many goals, and we have succeeded. From making this project we learned more about ourselves and each other and now we can work even better than before!

-Abiyanka Salina Sylvia



NEIGHBOURHOODS IN TRANSITION: A ROUND TABLE ON REVITALIZATION

What do Regent Park, Lawrence Heights and Alexander Park have in common? They are all large housing communities currently undergoing or planning to undergo major redevelopment. Five youth from these neighbourhoods came together in a round table to share their perspectives on revitalization. The round table was sponsored by Toronto Community Housing (TCHC) and held at Regent Park Focus.

Interviewer: What is your involvement in the revitalization process in your neighbourhood and what do you see are the positive aspects?

Jacob: I'm a Youth Animator in Lawrence Heights. I have lived in Lawrence Heights for my whole life. I think some of the positive aspects in our planned revitalization that it's going to be making the community mixed income, because right now we have probably the largest community housing space in the city. And that's all it is just community housing. There is one mixed income building there but that's pretty much it. So mixing up the community gives a lot of opportunity for the community to have different type's income. Another aspect that's good is new, cleaner and safer housing, because the buildings we have now are leaking and pipes are bursting which is obviously not safe.

Trudy: I'm a youth animator in Lawrence Heights as well. I've been living there for a number of years. As a community animator, I'm out there surveying youth and residents about how they feel about the redevelopment and a lot of people are optimistic. On the positive side a lot of people are hoping the quality of life will improve because of better housing condition. The good thing about the revitalization is people are coming together because it's going to be affecting the whole community. So people are meeting socially about the revitalization.

Myra: I'm taking urban planning at Ryerson University and I live in a community formally know as Alexander Park. It's now referred to as Ackerson coop and I have lived there all my life. Currently there's a lot of talk in the community about re-development and the possibility of re-vitalization. These discussions are been led by the visioning committee that's been set up and I am one of the two youth representatives that sit on the committee. One of the positive aspects is the housing quality and a chance for change. Another thing that's positive is there's an opportunity for citizens who live in the community to engage in the planning process so I think that's something positive. Also, I think mixed income housing is a positive aspect because I know some studies show have shown that it's actually a positive way of setting things up.

Fahim: I live in Regent Park and am a member of Regent Park Focus, a group that is encouraging youth to get involved in things that are happening in their community. The Corporation behind the new building models did a good job. My research shows that there's going to be less violence and low income people will be able to have more space to live in. These building are about 50 years old and getting new ones would obviously help.

Tyrone: I'm also a member of Regent Park Focus. The buildings are all pretty old and I used to live in them as well. They're always falling apart. I'm sure it's the same in a lot of the areas of the other panelists as well. So I think it's a really good thing that they're taking down the building and building from the ground up instead of using the band aid of just repairing over and over again. The band aid approach just isn't going to work and it's expensive too. It's going to be a really good thing, it's not going to look as depressing as it is right now, it's pretty dark and gloomy in this area because these are pretty old buildings.



Interviewer: What do you see as negative aspects of the revitalization process in your community?.

Myra: Nothing has really happened physically in Alexander Park yet – there's a lot of skepticism coming from community members and being a community member myself I don't blame them. There's a fear of being displaced from our homes even though there is supposed to be zero displacement but it's a fear that maybe in the long run people might get pushed out of the community and placed somewhere else. The thing is sometimes a lot of people do go off and start their lives somewhere else and then it's hard to come back years later when you have doctors chosen and kids already settled in schools in your new neighbourhood. And I also feel people are worried because they're not getting their voices heard enough. There is the opportunity to speak at meetings but still sometimes I think people feel that their voices are not being heard as much as they're told they are.

Some people are upset because they feel that there is already a plan in place and that the developers are giving them mixed messages like "We want to hear what you have to say but what you say only matters so much because certain things have to happen by a certain timeline." Another fear is that people are worried the new spaces will be smaller because the developers will look at all the free space and say "Let's develop, let's develop" and squeeze as many buildings as they can into the space. This could also mean more dense communities and a lot more high rises and I think there's a fear of that as well. And finally, I might have touched on this before but there's a fear that the revitalization might lead to changes in the community that will further widen the gap between rich and the poor over the years.

Fahim: Well honestly once people move out and the buildings get knocked down you're not really going to get the same community back. It's going to be a lot of different people and it just won't be the same as before. For example right now everything's pretty much friendly and the moment you leave your house you just run into people you know and just have a conversation for two minutes, but once the new Regent Park buildings are done and new people move in, you won't see that happening that much and it won't be as friendly as before.

Tyrone: I have to agree with Fahim. It's going to be a lot different when people return. I don't think this will necessarily be a bad thing but a lot of youth don't like this idea. You can hear a lot of their stories on our radio show and in our magazine; they talk about how scared they are because everyone they know is leaving. Hopefully everything will work out for them in the end.

Jacob: In Lawrence Heights I go out and talk to a lot of youth residents I find most of them are concerned about the situation, about moving out and being worried about not being asked to move back in. Even though there are laws that specify for every unit that's being broken down there has to be an equal space built back. A lot of people are worried and saying what if this law changes because the economy is getting worse and worse, and that's one concern I hear a lot. Another concern I hear is that people who have younger children that are elementary school age don't like having to move into a new community where their children will have to start new schools where they don't know anyone, then after five years of waiting for the redevelopment to finish, having to move back. It's a big problem they don't want to have their kid go through and it could bring a lot hardship to a family. The last negative thing is I see is with youth my age, which is 18 years old is by the time the revitalization project is done I'm going to want my own house. I'm a first priority just because I lived in the area. So do I have priority over people that want to buy these homes? And those are things I think a lot of people think negatively.

Trudy: Well said. Disruption is a big thing. Every where I go people are uttering they don't want disruption, even though the TCHC say they're going to minimize disruption. But it doesn't say zero disruption, it say's minimize so that's something I think people are fearful about. Another negative aspect is that people are afraid of losing some of the cultural values the community holds. For example in Lawrence heights we have a community center but on Sunday people from the Ethiopian community have a church mass there. But in the new community they might not do that anymore, if enough of them don't move back. Now a day's a lot of youth are telling me their recreational programs are being cut and they might have to start paying fee for service. And that's something that's a disadvantage of the revitalization, if it leads to increased program costs.



Interviewer: What approaches are there in your community to engage youth in the revitalization process.

Tyrone: Well I can talk about Regent Park Focus and what we do. For example we have a lot of ways for the youth to use media as a tool to express their concerns and issues about the relocation. We have a radio show on CKLN 88.1 FM on Tuesday evenings and we also have a magazine called Catch da Flava and we've been producing that for over a decade. And there are many other outlets they can use as well, for instance they can use the music studio and they've been producing tracks in there. It's a great way for them to express their concerns and issues about what's going on. The videos some of our youth have created have been played all over the place. I even think David Miller has watched one of our videos about Regent Park and the redevelopment process.

Myra: In Alexander Park they've hired Youth Animators who go out door to door and speak to the residents about the process of redevelopment. And we've come up with a survey that the Youth

Continued on next page

Animators help the residents fill out as they go door to door. The Youth Animators were selected from a group of youth who used to get together to participate in focus groups where we covered a lot of different issues. Also to increase youth engagement I'm one of two youth who are on the visioning committee so we get to represent the youth perspective in the community.



Trudy: Well some of the work we're doing over here in Lawrence Heights to engage youth are we do community events and barbecues. I brought flyers here (shows flyers) that were made from the artwork of youth who are from the community. At this event we invited youth to come together and share their experiences with each other. As a community animator I'm trying to go out there and get youth to think critically about revitalization and just start building a dialogue amongst ourselves. This is working well because youth have a lot to say and they just want to be given the forum to say it. This is all really important because 47% of the population of Lawrence Heights are youth so we should be heard. We also have a community studio in which youth can create music. The music that youth produce helps them express themselves and encourages them to preserve the rich ethnicity and culture that we have here in Lawrence Heights. I think there's so much that can be done if you give youth access to resources.



Fahim: Music is a great way to get the message out. For example when my friends and me heard about this new Regent Park we were pretty scared. We didn't get much information, however songs like the one that youth from Lawrence Heights made about the redevelopment would really calm people down and inform them, so music with great messages are a good way to engage youth.

Jacob: One thing I think TCHC did really well is bringing in the animator's program where basically they hire animator's to get in touch with the their peers in the neighbourhood. Being a youth animator is empowering because you are given a little more responsibility and respect in the area. Kids look up to you and say "Oh, what are they doing?" and it makes them think they could get more involved aswell.

Interviewer: Great. Thanks a lot every one for being here.

Special thanks to Adaku Huggins-Warner for transcribing this panel discussion

A Land of One's Own - Continued from page 8

areas with only partial control over their land and communities. One important connection between all three groups (the Jews, the Aboriginal people and the Palestinians) is that they all want and all deserve their own home and their own land. The last thing I want to say is that I think there is something we can learn from an experience like the Holocaust, which is that it can help us sympathize with other groups of people and their struggles. In preparing this talk I have been thinking about why Jews needed a homeland and how Israel came to be. Thinking about these things has helped me to also think about how other groups, like Palestinians and Canada's First Nations people, also need their own land and home. I think that as Jews we have a responsibility to think about and support the struggles of other groups of people who have been discriminated against.

REGENT PARK RESIDENT TO VOLUNTEER IN KENYA

Regent Park resident, Zahrah Munas, is a first year student at York University majoring in International Development. Zahrah is one of ten students who was accepted to go to Kenya on a volunteer project during the summer. While in Kenya, Zahrah will be volunteering in orphanages, health clinics, HIV/AIDS clinics and other needy organizations.

"My aim is not to go in and tell them what they need but to learn from them and to build relationships," says Zahrah. "These kind of projects help us to understand each others' communities and realize that the world is interconnected. It's a lot smaller than what we usually think it is."

Zahrah got involved in the project following a classroom presentation from Global Youth Network, a non-denominational Christian organisation committed to serving today's Youth Culture. The purpose of the trip is to encourage the development of leadership skills and offer valuable work and educational experience that will better help students determine their future career focus. These short-term trips serve to inspire Canadian young adults toward effecting change in their own communities and to continue to stay connected to the world.

Each team member is asked to raise \$3,500 to cover a portion of the team's expenses of transportation, accommodation, meals,



and training. If you would like to support Zahrah in her efforts, please contact the Global Youth Network office by phone at (416) 400 4585.

BIKEMAN AWARDED BEST COMMUNITY FILM

On September 5, 2009 Regent Park TV members were on hand to accept the Tim Horton's award for Best Community Film at the Cabbagetown International Film Festival. The award was presented to Focus in honour of the Adventures of Bikeman, a 3-part video about the antics of a bike riding superhero and his bike thieving namsis, The Stripped Bandit. The Cabbagetown audience was delighted with the film. Congratulations to everyone that was involved in making the video. Bikeman is available for viewing on Regent Park TV (www.regentpark.tv).

**George Smitherman, M.P.P.**
Toronto Centre



Please call or visit the Toronto Centre Community Action Centre for assistance with Government of Ontario programs and services such as:

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*the
new girl*



Iain Low Kee



GOODBYE ZARAI
BYE SHUKUMA
BACK HOME AT 9.

THANK YOU VERY
MUCH FOR DINNER!

SHANAE, WHAT
DID YOUR MOM
CALL YOU?
SHUKUDJEMBE?

SHUKUMA, IT'S MY
AFRICAN NAME IT MEANS
GRATEFUL. I GUESS IT
SOUNDS A BIT CORNY TO
OTHER PEOPLE, THAT'S
WHY I DON'T USE IT.

WHAT DID I JUST EAT? THE FOOD
WAS DELICIOUS!

JERK CHICKEN AND PEAS. IT'S
LIKE THE SAME FOOD THAT
EVERYONE EATS, EXCEPT WE
USE DIFFERENT SPICES TO
MIX UP THE TASTE.



HEY ME TOO! I ALSO HAVE
ANOTHER NAME SHAMAMAH!
IT MEANS FRAGRANCE.
SUPPOSEDLY I AM
DESTINED TO
SMELL GOOD
FOR THE REST
OF MY LIFE!
... YES, I
WISH I
COULD USE
MY GIVEN
NAME.



HAH,
SHAMAMAGIC?
WHAT?



YES, IT'S
SHAMAMAH. I'M
AFRAID THAT
PEOPLE WILL
TEASE ME!



LET'S THINK ABOUT IT WHEN
WE'RE OLDER. COMMON, LET'S
GO FIND THE OTHERS!



...SHAMAMAGIC! IS
THAT RIGHT?



SHUKUDJEMBE!
...WE SOUND
LIKE WE'RE
SINGING..

LET'S MAKE A PACT. WE'LL
CALL EACH OTHER BY OUR
REAL NAMES. AND ONLY WE
WILL KNOW.



PLEASD TO
MEET YOU,
SHUKUMA

* giggles* PLEASED
TO MEET YOU TOO,
SHAMAMAH!



SHAMAMAH,
WHY SO FAST?

SHUKUMA! HA,
KEEP UP!

YO SHANAE, ZARA!
SEE YOU AT DUNDAS
SQUARE!



RACE YOU...
SHUKUMA!

HUH?

YEAH MAN,
CATCH UP
WITH YOU
THERE!



to be continued...

IN FOCUS

In Focus brings you inside Regent Park Focus to keep you up to date on programs and events



The Youngsta's performing at Last Friday's in December



Marni Levitt performing at Last Friday's in December



The RP Director's Club practicing their videography skills



The cast of Detective Jones answer questions at the RP Film Festival



The Diva's Girl's Group doing arts & crafts



The Catch da Flava Youth Collective planning upcoming radio shows

TCHC YOUTH SYMPOSIUM

By LORRAINE GAJADHARSINGH

Through the funding and support of Toronto Community Housing and in partnership with local agencies such as Regent Park Focus and the Regent Park South Community Centre, the Regent Park Youth Leadership Program was borne. It was exciting to spend one evening a week with this bright and motivated group of youth who, through workshops such as Media and Critical Thinking, Identity, Conflict Resolution and Civic Engagement, developed skills and greater self-awareness and, were increasingly engaged in their community. Part of the program's mandate was for the youth to conceive and implement a community project. Due to the intensive 10-week presence of T.A.V.I.S (Toronto Anti-Violence Intervention Strategy) throughout the summer, it seemed timely for us to create a Community Safety focused project. Participants organized a Youth Symposium with the objective being, to improve the interactions and relationships amongst police and youth in Regent Park, thereby ultimately improving community safety.



The event took place on Saturday August 23rd, 2008 from 2:00 – 5:30 pm at Regent Park South Community Centre – 203 Sackville Green. Five police officers came out to play dodgeball with the youth and then stayed to participate in a forum of questions and answers. The afternoon was lively indeed! A brave group of officers willingly formed a panel and faced off a panel of youth. While the content addressed by the panels was sometimes controversial, the dynamic was always respectful. Feedback has informed us that the most appreciated part of the day were the smaller round table discussions with the police where everyone could flesh out some issues and enjoy tasty refreshments. This Youth Symposium provided a fantastic opportunity for the youth and the officers to interact on a more personal level. The police and youth were able to enter into a dialogue where they were able to educate each other on their respective realities, gain some understanding regarding each others' perspective



and consider how they might be able to support each other. The Symposium permitted the youth to meet some police officers, responsible for serving their community, and for both parties to have some fun together. We hope that this is just a foundation for what will be an ever evolving, respectful relationship between the police who serve Regent Park and the youth who reside here. Amzad Khan, the Youth Mentor and, myself, Lorraine Gajadharsingh, the Youth Engagement Coordinator, were honoured to work with this group of young people over the last few months and, we were very proud of their success in pulling off the first Community Safety Youth Symposium in Regent Park! Who knows? Maybe this will be an annual thing!



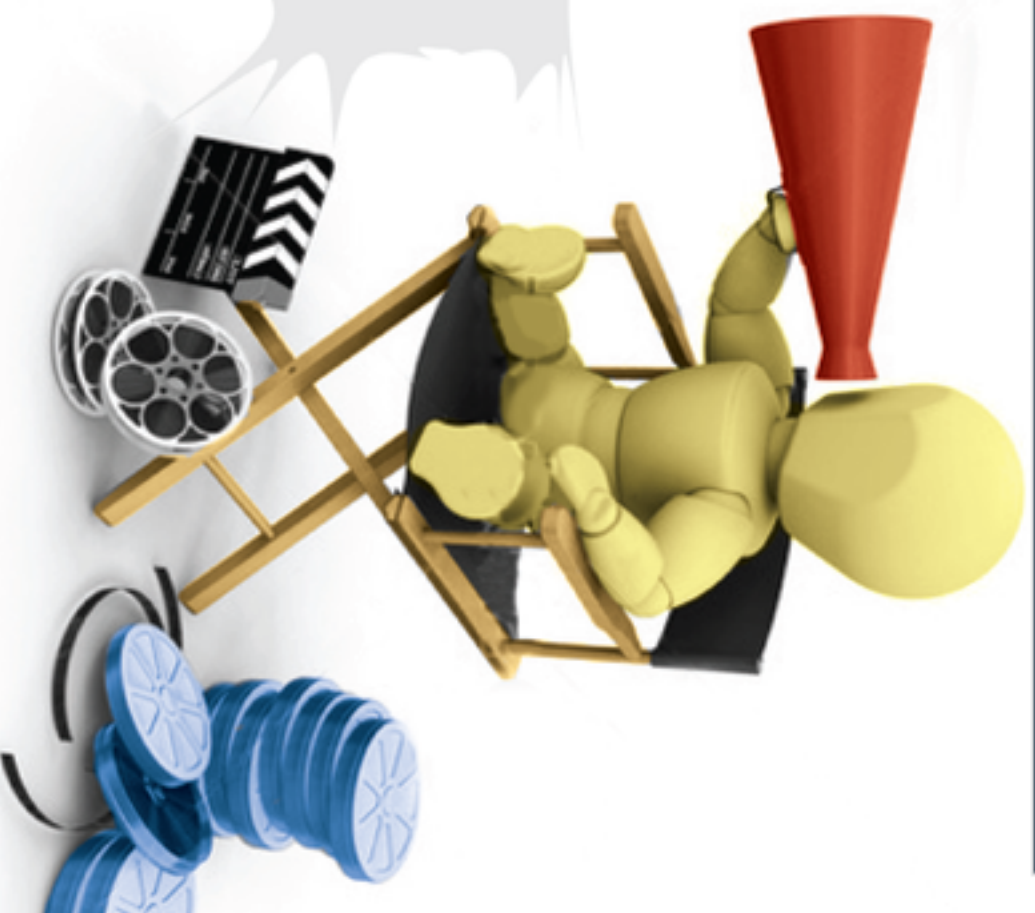
DIRECTOR'S GROUP

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