



## REGENT PARK FOCUS YOUTH MEDIA ARTS CENTRE

FALL NEWSLETTER - Fall 2010

The Buzz is a quarterly newsletter devoted to informing the broader community about the activities of the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. This issue covers the period of September 1, 2010 to November 30, 2010. Previous issues of the Buzz are available for download at [www.regentparkfocus.com](http://www.regentparkfocus.com)

### Community Outreach

Every September we turn our attention to informing the community about the exciting after-school programs and activities Regent Park Focus has on offer for the fall season. This year Focus staff made a special effort to outreach to local schools and community organizations. Some of these efforts included screening the video Detective Jones and participating in a panel presentation for the York University Teacher Candidates at the Regent Park faculty site; staffing an information table at an all day community fair for high school students living in Regent Park; and presenting at two school community/family nights held at Lord Dufferin and Regent Park Duke of York.

### Studio for Photography

Established in 1995 the aim of Regent Park Focus Studio for Photography Program is to build youth skills in digital arts and to engage youth to use the medium of photography as a vehicle for self-expression and health promotion.

In October 2010, Regent Park Focus launched the fall season with an offering of 4 after-school photography programs for children and youth in the area. The program was delivered in partnership with the Gerrard Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club, with funding provided by the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sports. The program, which was offered Mondays through Thursdays from 4:00-6:00 pm, consisted of 12 weeks of photography with a theme of documenting the changing neighborhood. Four groups of youth, ranging in age from 10 to 18 years old, participated in the program. The sessions were facilitated by Nick Kozak, a professional photographer currently conducting a year-long artist residency at Regent Park Focus.

The young people met weekly to participate in workshops on camera use, exposure and composition. In addition, they studied photo slide shows to learn about the genres of documentary and travel photography. Without a doubt, the most popular segment of the workshops was when participants were given the opportunity to take to the streets with their cameras.



Activities included taking portrait shots of one another and members of the wider community; capturing candid scenes of the neighbourhood; and documenting the urban landscape around them. Many participants found that during these walkabouts they ended up having interesting conversations about the redevelopment going on in the area.

## Spot light on William Kuan

The Thursday sessions of the fall photography program were reserved for older youth who had participated in many of our programs in the past. One of the photographers in this group, 16 year old William Kuan, took part in The City of Toronto's Our City, Our Stories contest in 2009 and was awarded one of the 10 prizes by Canon and the City. He has since been hired by Daniels

Following the photo outings, participants returned to Regent Park Focus to download their photos, critique each other's work and take part in further photography skill development workshops. To view their amazing shots, check out the photography section of our website where you'll find photography blogs and an online gallery.

## Focus House Band Rocks Cabbagetown Festival

The 2010 Annual Cabbagetown Street Festival took place on Saturday September 11, 2010. Every year the event features a diverse array of musical performances at various stage venues along Parliament Street. This year the Regent Park Focus House Band was invited to perform at the youth stage, just south of Carleton Street. Consisting of Oshane Duncan on drums, Trevonne Wilson on keyboards, Iain Ikie on base and August Ikie on vocals, the band delighted a huge crowd of festival goers with a 30-minute set featuring a variety of original works and covers. Congratulations to the Focus House Band!



## Last Fridays

Established in 2008 Last Fridays is a performance event that is hosted by Regent Park Focus normally on the last Friday of each month. The event serves as a social inclusion forum for residents of various incomes and backgrounds to meet and socially interact with each other. The Regent Park Focus House Band performs regularly at the event.

On Friday October 29th, Artscape joined with Regent Park Focus to host our monthly Last Friday event in the community room at 246 Sackville, a newly constructed TCHC building. Over 100 people were in attendance. The evening began with a buffet of Caribbean and South Asian cuisine - as usual the food was delicious. After refreshments the Regent Park Focus House Band kicked things off with a short set of contemporary blues cover tunes. Having warmed up the audience up, the Marni





Levitt Trio took over. Marni treated the audience to original songs played on guitar. She was accompanied by the soft rhythms of the African drumming. Marni was followed by singer song writer Ania Soul, whose songs were heart filled and intimate. Next up was COBA, the African Dance group that will be moving into the Regent Park Arts and Cultural Centre shortly. Their ten person crew gave a spirited, high energy performance of African dance. Following COBA, a young participant of the Regent Park School of Music gave an excellent violin

recital. The Regent Park Focus House Band ended the night with a mixture of pop covers and original music sung by lead singer August Ikie. All in all it was a night of great sound.

Unfortunately, due to the withdrawal of partnership support from the Toronto Community Housing (as a result of a budget freeze), the November and December Last Fridays were cancelled. We are currently seeking other funding partners so we can keep Last Fridays going.

## Regent Park TV

Established in 1993 the Regent Park TV (RPTV) program empowers young people to create videos that are meaningful to them. Once produced the videos are hosted on-line at [www.regentpark.tv](http://www.regentpark.tv). Members meet weekly to plan their productions, with filming and editing taking place in the evenings and weekends.

With the arrival of the City of Toronto elections this fall, Regent Park TV sought to increase youth interest in the campaign. The program provided individual youth with video equipment and editing time to make their own Rick Mercer-like videos on any of the candidates or issues that piqued their attention. As a result, three videos were produced about mayoral candidates Sarah Thompson, Rob Ford and George Smitherman. These are available for viewing online at [www.regentpark.tv](http://www.regentpark.tv). (Please note that the opinions expressed by the youth film makers are their own and do not reflect the opinions of the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre). We hope you agree that the videos would make Rick Mercer proud!



## Catch da Flava Radio & Magazine Collective

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

Catch da Flava Radio is still going strong thanks to members of the radio collective: Saima Noreen, Kelvin Mahadao, Issac Mikbay, Layia X, and our radio tech in training, Trevonne Wilson. Highlights of our fall radio programming included:

- A radio show on the City of Toronto Mayoralty

elections, featuring candidates Joe Pantalone, George Smitherman and Sarah Thompson. (Rob Ford was unavailable).

- A radio show on recent shootings in Regent Park and the power of art to make a difference.

- A radio show on mental illness and addictions, in which young people discussed recreational drugs, gambling, smoking and whether obsessive use of the internet or shopping could be considered an addiction.
- A radio show on bullying and its impact on victims, including a discussion on whether schools are doing enough to reduce this age-old problem.
- A radio show on HIV and sexual transmitted diseases and whether young people are adequately informed about these issues.



Meanwhile, the Magazine side of the collective has been in a period of transition. Several of the group's dynamic leaders decided not to return in the fall due to other commitments. Fortunately, other youth stepped up to carry torch and in October Catch da Flava welcomed six young women members to the team. In addition, Terrence Cheng, a Faculty of Education student from York University, decided to volunteer in program. Over the fall season Terrence joined Sarah Feldbloom in facilitating the program and conducting journalism workshops.

In October the collective was thrilled to unexpectedly receive an \$800.00 donation from Forrec Ltd, a planning and design firm to purchase new microphones and other needed studio equipment. Special thanks to Forrec Ltd for this assistance. And as always, tune in every Tuesday at 7:30 pm on CKLN 88.1 FM to hear exciting, passionate programming on the issues that matter to youth in Regent Park.



## Be Scene Magazine

Established in 2008, Be Scene is a magazine that serves young people in the O'Connor, Flemingdon and Thorncliffe neighbourhoods. The magazine is produced by community youth in partnership with the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre, the Flemingdon Health Centre and local schools.

The Be Scene Youth collective wasted little time getting back on track as soon as school resumed. In September/October they celebrated the launch of their 5th edition of Be Scene Magazine. The issue focused on Creative Arts and featured a variety of articles exploring young people's relationship to creativity and the arts.

Over the fall season the Be Scene collective, comprised of 13 young women, collaborated with the Thorncliffe Neighbourhood Office's (TNO) girls group 'Voices,' and the Urban Alliance's Gender Violence Media Project. Every Thursday the three groups met at the TNO Youth Space to write and talk about gender violence and anti-oppression. Though these are serious subjects, a safe space was created where the young women were able to share experiences,



talk from their hearts and laugh when the time was right. After all, some of the stereotypes about women and gender are so ridiculous they're funny! In one particularly meaningful session, each member was asked to meditate on something from their time together that had either made them uncomfortable, inspired them to want to learn more, or brought up questions. Everyone had to close their eyes and see, feel, and remember the moment they chose because that's where media making so often

## The Focus Internet Lab

For years the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre has been providing young people with free access to internet linked computers for researching, music downloading, social networking, games and homework. The computers are available daily on a first come, first serve basis and are always in high demand. This trend continued throughout the fall. Unfortunately, the computers are reaching their maturity date and need to be replaced. New computers are definitely high up on our list of the many budget items we are currently seeking donations and/or funds to cover.

## Relocation Update

The current Regent Park Focus site at 600 Dundas St. East has been scheduled for demolition as part of the plans for a new park and aquatic centre in the neighbourhood. Over the past year, staff and board members have been working diligently with the City of Toronto and architects on the design plans for Regent Park Focus' new site, a newly constructed, City owned building at 38 Regent Street. The building is scheduled to be completed early in the new year. Stay tuned for news about our relocation in the next issue of the Buzz...

## About Regent Park Focus

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

Youth are encouraged to work collectively to develop

begins—by wanting to research, express and address something that hits a nerve in us. The young women also had the chance to participate in a photojournalism workshop. The group is currently developing their ideas for the next issue of Be Scene, which will have a theme of gender. We don't know what they will come up with, but whatever it is, it will come from the wisdom of many women's voices. That's exciting stuff!

## Local Motion Book Launch

This fall Coach House Books released the final title in their uTopia series - Local Motion: The Art of Civic Engagement in Toronto. The book was officially launched on November 16th before a standing room only audience at Toronto's Lulu Lounge. Local Motion explores how citizens can inspire positive change in our city. The book features many innovative groups and individuals, including a section on the work of Adonis Huggins and the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. The book is available for purchase at:

[www.chbooks.com/catalogue/local-motion](http://www.chbooks.com/catalogue/local-motion)



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

### Regent Park Focus is funded by:

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





## ***Did You Know?***

Did you know that 1,392 people took part in program activities offered by Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre during the Fall 2010 quarter?

Or that Regent Park Focus conducted presentations to 1,553 people and received 2,665 website visitors during this same period?

**We're still busy!**