



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 March 1, 2010 to May 31, 2010. Previous issues of The Buzz are available for downloading at www.regentparkfocus.com.

The Divas Girls Group

Established in 1996, the [Divas Girls Program](#) provides girls, ages 10-14 and living in Regent Park with a place to socialize and explore their identities as racialized young women entering the challenging world of teenagehood. The program takes place every Friday at the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. In addition, in October 2009 the program was expanded to two local schools.

During the spring season the Divas Girls Program continued with after school activities on Wednesdays at Duke of York School, on Thursdays at Lord Dufferin School and on Fridays at Regent Park Focus. Over this period there were 35 girls involved in the program, ranging in age from 10 to 14 years old. Coordinated by artist Emmie Cans, the girls engaged in a variety of activities including: movies; trips to the AGO; making play-doh sculptures inspired by the amazing poetry of Maya Angelou; and studying the imagery of dynamic painter Jean Michel Basquiat. On the media literacy side, the Divas participated in sessions about social media, including the potential dangers of internet sites like Facebook when used irresponsibly. The program also covered the issue of violence at school - especially in regard to aggression targeted at young women. The Divas Girls Program continues to flourish and be well attended.

The 2010 Divas Girls Program is generously supported by the Ministry of Health Promotion and Sports After-School Initiative, in partnership with the Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club.



March Break Madness

Each year Regent Park Focus offers a free daily program during the March Break holiday. The program meets the needs of families looking for safe, supervised, affordable, and fun activities for their children.

The 2010 March Break Madness Program was attended by 16 children, ages 11 to 14 years. The week long program gave them the chance to participate in art making activities, games and trips. The program was held from March 15th to March 19th and featured workshops such as Bead and Jewellery making with artist Colleen Clarke, Photography taught by Nick Kozak, Dance Workshops led by members of Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie Dancers, Comic Book creation with artist Andrea Mantica and Chalk Drawing around issues of personal power led by student interns from the University of Toronto. On the last day, participants were treated to a trip to the Ontario Science Centre. For more information about this fun week, check out the March Break Madness video, which was produced by Regent Park TV members Issac Mbikay,

Abdul Wahid Al-Basith, Omar Saifuddin and Rahul Miah. A full evaluation report of the March Break Madness Program is available upon request. The 2010 March Break Madness Program was sponsored through funds made available by the Ontario Arts Council and the Toronto Arts Council.



Last Fridays': A Community That Plays Together Stays Together

Established in 2008, [Last Fridays](#) is a performance event hosted by Regent Park Focus 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, while enjoying musical performances. [The Regent Park Focus House Band](#) performs regularly at the event.

Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre did it again! Held another fabulous Last Fridays' show at the Daniels Presentation Centre, that is. The Friday March 26th show was dedicated to Latin music. The event got started around 6:30 pm with jerk chicken, chicken wings, fried chicken, and rice both brown and white. In other words, the audience was well fed. The entertainment kicked off with the Regent Park Focus House Band. Following this, Rino Manfredi led an interactive workshop on Brazilian drumming. Before we knew it Rino was conducting an orchestra of Brazilian drummers made up of audience members. Let's just say it was GREAT. The evening also included hot Latin and Flamenco music provided by Alvaro Oyarce and the hilarious musical stylings of Mark Harris. The Focus House Band closed the evening with their fabulous licks.



The 2010 Last Fridays' Program is generously supported by Daniels Corporation and Rogers Communication Inc.

The Focus House Band participates in the Cole Street Celebration

On June 12th, 2010 the [Regent Park Focus House Band](#) joined the Regent Park community in celebrating the opening of Cole Street, the neighbourhoods newest street. Led by band leader August Lew Kee, the Focus House Band performed an hour long medley of songs on the corner of Parliament and Cole Street. Everyone seemed to enjoy them. The Regent Park Focus Divas Girls Group also got into the act by performing a dance routine choreographed by the internationally renowned Coleman Lemieux & Compagnie Dancers. A video of [The Opening of Cole Street](#) event is available on [Regent Park TV](#).



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 youth living in Regent Park and provides a forum for them to promote health, discuss issues of importance to them and cover current events. In addition to the radio show, the collective also produces Catch da Flava magazine, a print newsmagazine that has been serving Toronto youth since 1995.

Members of [Catch da Flava Radio & Magazine Collective](#) continue to be involved with producing radio shows for broadcast on CKLN 88.1. During the spring season, members of the youth collective produced radio shows on: Earth Hour; Parents perception of Teens; the Regent Park Redevelopment; Secret Societies; The Role of Technology in our lives; The Olympics (are the costs too high); Women's Rights; Genetically Modified Foods; Obesity and more. You can check out our radio blogs or our radio archives to find out more about these and other shows.



Regent Park TV Tackles Poverty and the Social Welfare System



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

During the week of April 19–23th Regent Park Focus had the pleasure of partnering with students from City View Alternative Elementary School to produce an RPTV video documentary on social justice. The resulting video, [Raise the Welfare Rates](#), features interviews with teacher and social activist David Stocker, as well as members of the public, and asks some provocative questions about Ontario's social welfare system and poverty in the province. The video was screened for the students and staff of CityView Alternative School and is available for viewing on [Regent Park TV](#). Congratulations to youth directors Finley McNally and Geodie Huban!



RPTV Explores Masculinity

For the past four years Regent Park Focus has been partnering with OASIS Alternative Secondary School to run an integrated Video Arts and English Studies unit on Masculinity. This year, once again, Focus staff members Adonis Huggins and Emmanuel Kedini worked with teachers and male students at the school to produce a video on challenging dominant ideas about masculinity. [Why Do Men Silence Each Other?](#) features a hilarious game show in which the host espouses an aggressive form of masculinity that is not shared by the

male contestants: trouble erupts when the contestants decide that enough is enough. The video also includes a short dramatization about a group of male friends who teases another member of their group for developing a relationship with a girl. After the friend departs, the group reveals their real feelings about the relationship. Congratulations to all the OASIS students involved in the project!



RPTV Examines the Issue of Access to Contraband Cigarettes

In the spring, RPTV partnered with the Youth Voices Research Group (based at University of Toronto) to review photos and video footage shot by 12 young people from across Ontario. The material was all in relation to the topic of smoking. After viewing the footage, the Regent Park Focus team got to work editing the material into two viewable videos. The first video, [Access Part 1](#), explores young people's access to contraband cigarettes, while the second one, [Access Part 2](#), considers young people's access to smoking treatment options. Youth Voices were very pleased with the work the Regent Park Focus crew did on the videos. Six members of the RPTV crew that

produced the videos attended and presented the videos to 30 youth at a Youth Voices Conference on Access to cheap/black market cigarettes held at Trinity Bellwoods Community Centre in Toronto on March 26th. Both videos were presented by Youth Voices at the Town Youth Participation Strategies conference in Ottawa, to a crowd of 300 young people. The videos were also screened at a health promotion conference in Toronto. They are available for viewing on [Regent Park TV](#).



RPTV Documents the Regent Park Redevelopment

One of the ongoing activities of Regent Park TV is to document the current transformation of the community. In this vein, during the spring months RPTV produced videos on: the opening of a new Royal Bank branch; [Premier McGuinty's visit](#) to view the progress of the Regent Park redevelopment; the [Regent Park Lottery](#) determining which of the many relocated residents get to move back in to the new buildings first; the opening of the new playground at Spruce Court School; and the

official introduction of Cole Street. Closer to home, the RPTV team has also been following the construction of 38 Regent Street, which will be the new home of the Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre. In addition to these videos RPTV continues to be dedicated to profiling the services of Regent Park. During the spring RPTV also produced a video on the services of the Parliament Street Toronto Public Library.



Regent Park Focus Studio for Photography

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

In March, Regent Park Focus offered a weekly after-school digital photography program for interested high school students in the area. The program was led by Ken Fisico, a professional photographer with many years of experience. 8 youth participated in the program. Over the course of 11 weeks, they learned the fundamentals of photography and composition and explored their neighbourhoods through the lens of a camera. A two week photography exhibition of the group's work was subsequently held at the Ryerson University Student Centre from May 13 to May 27th, 2010. At the official launch of the exhibit, on May 13th, program participant Mohammed Chowdhury was honored with a certificate for the most promising youth photographer and awarded with a new digital Nikon camera.

Congratulations Mohammed! The exhibition then toured to the Hot Shot Gallery in Kensington Market from June 30 to July 7th and showed in the Regent Park Focus Gallery from August to December.



Coming Together Video and Photography Launch

On May 3rd, 2010 Regent Park Focus partnered with Toronto Community Housing and the Silver Screen Festival to host a screening and remounting of the Coming Together Project. The Coming Together was a 15 week project that took place in the spring of 2009 involving five youth from Regent Park Focus and six seniors from the community. The intent of the project was to engage seniors and youth in a collaborative community arts project involving photography and video. The repeat screening and photo exhibition of the project was held in honour of Senior Awareness Month and the opening of 252 Sackville, the new seniors building in Regent Park. Approximately 30 people attended the launch. The Coming Together Video is available for viewing on [Regent Park TV](#).



My Regent Park Project Gets Underway

The My Regent Park Project, a new initiative sponsored by the National Crime Prevention Program, got underway in March 2010. The aim of the initiative is to identify young people at risk for gang or crime involvement and to provide them and their families with targeted supports to help them integrate back into the community successfully. Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre is proud to be a partner of the project, along with Dixon Hall (the project lead), Salvation Army, Kiwanis Boys & Girls Club, Christian Resource Centre and the Regent Park Community Health Centre. To assist in developing and implementing coordinated strategies to meet the

needs of participating youth, each of the partnering organizations was provided with a full time youth outreach worker or a parent support worker. We are pleased to have Megan Drummond as the Regent Park Focus Youth Outreach Worker for the My Regent Park project. During the spring, Megan began her work by conducting outreach to youth in the community. If you are aware of a youth who is having difficulties and could benefit from the My Regent Park Project please feel free to contact Megan at Regent Park Focus (416-863-1074) or to get in touch with one of the other participating agencies.

Did you Know?

Did you know that 1004 people took part in program activities offered by Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre during the Spring quarter?

Or that Regent Park Focus conducted presentation to 525 people and received 3,809 [website](#) visitors during this same period?

We're still busy!

About Regent Park Focus

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

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

Regent Park Focus receives organizational funding through The Toronto Arts Council-Community Arts and the Ontario Arts Council-Arts Education, as well as in-kind partnership support from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

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