



Summer 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 June, July and August of 2010. Previous issues of the Buzz are available for downloading at

www.regentparkfocus.com.

Catch da Flava Partners with Luminato

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.

In April, May and June, the Catch da Flava Collective collaborated with the Luminato Festival's Education Program to host a series of music journalism workshops on the theme of "Divas." The workshops aimed to inspire members of Collective to write articles on Canadian women musicians, especially those who were scheduled to perform at the upcoming 2010 Luminato Arts Festival. Special guests were invited to facilitate the workshops including music critic Jody Rosen, who writes for Rolling Stone, The New York Times and Slate Magazine, and Carl Wilson, who is the Culture Editor at the Globe and Mail. The participants also watched and critiqued music videos from various artists. Over time, the group's interest swayed more to internationally recognized "Divas" such as Lady Gaga and even Justin Bieber. Each week participants presented their draft articles to each other for review; after careful editing, their articles were complete and ready for printing in the Gender issue of Catch da Flava magazine (see below). The program culminated with the young women participants moderating a public panel on Pop Divas on Saturday June 19th as part of the Luminato Festival. Everyone

had a great time. Congratulations to everyone who participated in this program. The 2010 Catch da Flava Program was sponsored by Dion Durrell & Associates.



Catch da Flava Gender Issue

In June 2010 Regent Park Focus released the long awaited Gender issue of **Catch da Flava magazine**. Produced by members of the youth collective, the issue featured articles on famous musical Divas, along with various discussions about gender relations. Notable topics covered included; a debate on whether men take their household responsibilities seriously; an essay on Lookism, which is discrimination based on physical appearance; articles challenging dominant notions of male masculinity; articles on female body image and the objectification of women in the media; and a look at the current state of gender discrimination. The magazine can be viewed on-line and print copies are still available. This issue of Catch da Flava magazine was sponsored by the Luminato Festival and Dion Durrell & Associates.



BeScene Magazine

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

Spring 2010 saw Be Scene Coordinator Myia Davar depart the program to pursue educational opportunities in the United States. We wish her the best of luck. Myia's shoes were ably filled by activist Sarah Feldbloom, who stepped in to keep the program running on track. In June, the Be Scene youth collective released their fourth issue of the magazine on the theme of "Change." The issue featured a variety of articles written by youth. Towards the end of June, members of the Be Scene Collective visited the Toronto Zine Library where they received a tour and learnt about the history of zines, which were started as little mailed booklets, often covering DIY (do-it-yourself) topics. The group also hosted a visit from Michelle Kay, the Online News Editor for Yahoo and the new Webstories Editor for Shameless Magazine. With piles of magazines in hand, and a nifty sheet of resources to check out, Michelle led a fabulous workshop about blogging and web opportunities for independent magazines. The 2010 Be Scene Magazine program was supported by the Youth Challenge Fund and Dion Durrell & Associates.



Hot Shot Gallery

On Wednesday, June 30th, Regent Park Focus hosted the launch of a youth photo-exhibition and video screening at Hot Shot Gallery in Kensington Market. The event was an opportunity to celebrate everyone's work over the course of the school year and to bring families together to celebrate Canada Day. Approximately 60 audience members attended the event. Supper was provided and everyone had a good time. The work remained on exhibit from June 28th to July 7th, 2010.



Making Media Summer Program

Established in 1995 the Regent Park Focus Making Media Summer Program is an 8-week series of daily life-skills and media arts workshops offered to individual youth, as well as to children attending summer camps with other agencies in the area.

Summer is here! What does that mean? Time for the 2010 Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Making Media Summer Program. This year the Making Media Summer Program was coordinated by Michelle Peters, a 3rd year student from Ryerson's School of Social Work. There were two main themes to this year's summer program. One theme focused on the development of Life Skills such as leadership, teamwork, goal setting, project-task management and conflict resolution. The second theme was on Youth Mental Health and included issues such as peer pressure, substance abuse, racism, discrimination, stress, and youth violence. The goal of the summer program was to support youth in creating media arts projects (e.g. videos, comic books, photography and audio arts pieces) that integrated and explored both the Life Skills and the Youth Mental Health themes. In total 108 children and youth attended the program. The Making Media Summer Program was sponsored by a City of Toronto Community Investment in Drug Prevention Grant.



Summer Audio Arts and Radio Production Workshops

This summer, every Monday afternoon a group of eight high school students arrived at Regent Park Focus to participate in a 4-hour audio arts and radio production workshop. The goal of the workshops was to assist youth in producing an audio play and/or radio show segment on the issue of youth mental health. The sessions began with a series of icebreakers, an overview of project management skills and a number of discussions on the topic of mental health led by Sophia Bishop, a consultant from the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH). After much exploration of the issues, Sophia passed on the weekly facilitation of the group to D-Lishus, a professional theatre artist. D-Lishus' role was to help the group construct their audio scripts using the information they had gathered in the earlier workshops. She did this in part by leading the group through role-playing activities on the mental health issues that were discussed. In August, the group began writing their audio scripts and preparing their radio show. On August 17th

their **radio show on Youth Mental Health** was broadcast to the community on CKLN 88.1 and the last week of the summer was spent recording their audio plays for future broadcast on the radio. Everyone had a great time learning about mental health and addictions through role-play and creating their audio art.



Summer Comic Book Workshops



Every Tuesday morning, ten tweens (10-13 years old) from the Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club Summer camp came to Regent Park Focus to take part in a 2-hour **comic book program**. The same workshop was repeated on Tuesday afternoons with 10 children from Central Neighbourhood House's Summer camp. The instructor for the program was illustrator Michael Welsh. Michael taught the fundamentals of illustration and spoke with participants about the various life skills they use in their day-to-day lives. He then assisted them in making their very own comic strips, which explored a life skill of their choice. In doing this, the program showed participants that comics are not always about super heroes, villains and violence, but in fact can be used to look at a wide range of topics.

Summer Video Workshops

This year's Making Media Summer Program offered individual youth, along with children and youth attending local summer programs, the opportunity to produce videos on issues of concern to them. The facilitator of the **video workshop** series was Emmanuel Kedini, who had assistance from other staff members. In total, there were four different workshop groups that met weekly over the course of July and August.

The first group was comprised of seven local youth, ages 15 to 18, who registered in the workshops as individuals. Most of these participants had previous experience in Regent Park Focus video programs. These youth met weekly on Tuesday afternoons to produce a short video entitled "The Lottery," which reflects on the ways poverty contributes to stress. The video explores this theme by through the relationship of a poverty stricken couple who get into an argument about the purchase of a lottery ticket. The group also continued work on a video they had begun in the spring on meaningful youth employment. Specifically, this video explores young people's dissatisfaction with low wage, service work in which young people often have no input into their job conditions.

The second group, comprised of 8 teens from the Gerrard Kiwanis Club, also came to Regent Park Focus to take part in video production training sessions. These teens worked on a video documentary surveying their peer's views on a variety of current events (i.e. the recession) and their impact on youth health. In addition to providing editing

services, Regent Park Focus offered consultation support to this group of teens. The video is still in process.

The third group was comprised of 18 children, ages 10 -12, from Dixon Hall's Summer camp program. These children came to Regent Park Focus on Wednesday mornings to take part in role-playing and improvisation games and to develop a script and produce a video on the harmfulness of rumors.

The final group was comprised of 15 children, ages 10-12, attending Gerrard Kiwanis Club's Summer program. These children came in on Wednesday afternoons and created a video about a new student who becomes subjected to bullying.



Summer Photography Arts Workshops

Every Thursday two groups of children and a small group of youth came to Regent Park Focus to participate in digital photography workshops. The first group was comprised of 10 children from Dixon Hall; the second group was comprised of 8 children from CNH; and the third group was comprised of 3 youth came from SEAS, an organization serving South East Asian youth. The workshop for children was led by Regent Park Focus artist-in-residence Emmie Cans, while the SEAS workshop was led by Regent Park Focus' resident photographer, Nick Kozak.

The aim of the workshop was to integrate reflection about life skills with **digital photography** and the arts. After discussing issues related to project management, teamwork and decision making, the groups were divided into small photography teams and given various tasks



to complete. For example, one of the tasks was to go out into the community and use the digital cameras to tell stories about their neighbourhood. Another project focused on the redevelopment by having participants take photos of all the different construction signs in

the neighbourhood and create a mural with them. The children and youth all reported enjoying the workshop.

All in all the 2010 Regent Park Focus Making Media Summer Program was a great success.

Did you Know?

Did you know that 905 people took part in program activities offered by Regent Park Focus Youth Media Arts Centre during the Summer quarter?

Or that Regent Park Focus conducted presentation to 590 people and received 5751 [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's Community Arts program, the Ontario Arts Council's Arts Education program, as well as in-kind partnership support from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

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