

RECREATION CONNECTIONS TOOL KIT LAUNCH

In a recent informational workshop, the CCI's Recreation for All Action Group released its much-anticipated Recreation Connections Tool Kit. The Tool Kit content is based on the FirstEnergy Active Living Research Project, which began in September 2004. FirstEnergy Capital Corp. and the City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services funded the research project. The objective of the research was to identify whether participation in recreational activities, defined as physical activities, arts, culture and volunteerism, is increased if facilitated by an outreach worker. In the project, outreach workers called 'Recreation Connectors' provided information and support to families, in one of Calgary's most vulnerable neighbourhoods, to help facilitate recreation for their children. Results of the research were most promising as 21 per cent of the children who received support from Connectors improved in their degree of participation in recreational activities.

This successful study did not end in research. The knowledge gained about how to eliminate the many barriers that children face beyond the costs of lessons and activities were developed into the Recreation Connectors Tool Kit. In addition, in response to the findings, the Calgary Health Region has allocated three full time Recreation Connectors to The Calgary Learning Village Collaborative and the City of Calgary employs a Recreation Connector at the Village Square Leisure Centre.

The Tool Kit will help professionals who work with children and families to link children/youth and families to recreation opportunities and subsidies. More than 50 professionals who work with children and families attended the workshop.

Three guest speakers presented at the launch. Dr. Tish Doyle-Baker from the University of Calgary spoke about the preventative effects of recreation on childhood obesity rates and depression levels. She also discussed the positive influence recreation can have on a student's academic performance. Cori Stent of the City of Calgary Wildflower Arts Centre shared the importance of artistic expression and creation in a child's development; Tobi Ferris from Child and Youth Friendly Calgary presented on the positive socializing aspects of youth volunteerism.

The Tool Kit and workshop is one aspect of the Recreation for All Action Group's strategy to encourage youth engagement in recreation. The campaign is entitled "Want Your Teen Off the Couch". The third year of a social marketing campaign will begin in 2008.

The Recreation Connections Tool Kit is available at www.childrensinitiative.ca

For more information, contact: Margie Ronca,
The Calgary Children's Initiative
margier@calgaryunitedway.org 403.231.2613



UPDATE ON EVENTS

12 to Young Adult Working Group Professional Development Series Drugs and Teens:

November 18-24 is National Addiction Awareness Week. November 21st with help from The Calgary Children's Initiative (CCI), The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) engaged over 40 community partners in a half-day workshop to share their most recent research and practical ideas about how to prevent, recognize, and respond when kids head in the wrong direction. AADAC partners shared their latest findings on the trends affecting drug use among teens in Calgary. This is the third in a series of instructional workshops organized by the CCI 12 to Young Adult Working Group.

UPCOMING EVENTS

April/May 2008 - The Calgary Children's Initiative, the Calgary Health Region and the Injury Prevention Coalition will host a conference - **Striking the Risk Balance: Protectiveness and Choice** with keynote speaker, author Michael Ungar.

For more information: Amber Forest, CCI Associate, **231.2610** or amber.forest@calgaryunitedway.org

SUCCESS FOR EVERY KID IN CALGARY

The Calgary Children's Initiative (CCI) is a collaborative engagement of our whole community to ensure the best life chances for children and youth. Guided by a Council of Champions we partner with 70 organizations and focus on changing practice, policy and systems. United Way of Calgary and Area founded CCI.

CCI STAFF TEAM

Director

Graham Clyne

Associates

Katy Doucette

Amber Forest

Nancy Dutton

Margie Ronca

Executive Assistant

Kathy MacDonald

Administrative Assistant

Deb Idiens

Communications Associate

Jill Hilderman



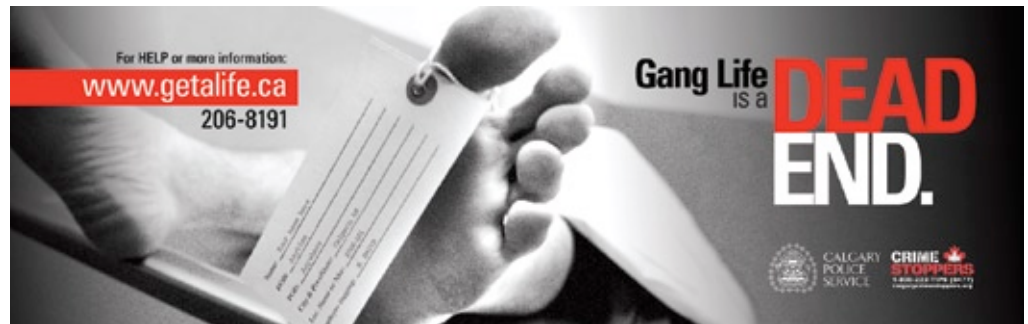
Professional Development Series – Youth Gangs in Calgary

On September 27th, CCI and partners hosted the third in a series of Professional Development workshops. On behalf of the Calgary Police Service Youth at Risk Development Project, Constable Devolin and Constable Swihart of the Gang Action Unit presented on the growing concern surrounding youth gangs in Calgary. An opening video depicted the powerful draws and the dangers of youth gangs and highlighted the aggressive awareness campaign the Calgary Police Service is implementing in the City featuring the slogan, "Gang Life is a Dead End." A youth speaker followed the video, addressing her

brother's gang involvement and the lasting impact it has had on her family. Constable Devolin and Constable Swihart delivered a poignant and direct message, which was reported on the evening news.

For more information on the Gang Action Unit and their work in Calgary, visit: <http://www.getalife.ca>.

For more information on upcoming Professional Development Workshops, contact: Amber Forest, Associate, The Calgary Children's Initiative, amber.forest@calgaryunitedway.org



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

"Community Consultations Shape New Directions for CCI"

During the past months there have been over 80 meetings with key stakeholders, volunteers and children and youth serving organizations to identify how the CCI might re-shape some of its directions and better align its work with community partners. These meetings have provided some clear common directions and shared priorities—which have been shared with, and endorsed by, the Council of Champions. A public forum, hosted on October 19th, shared the overall directions with our key partners and volunteers and we have now moved into an implementation and redesign process.

While we anticipate a number of fairly significant changes to the structures and processes of the CCI to support these key directions, there will still be a need for our volunteers to stay engaged and help shape the future of the organization. Special thanks to all who participated and shared their ideas about how the CCI could really make a difference for the lives of children and youth in Calgary; the next leg of the journey begins!

Graham Clyne

Director, The Calgary Children's Initiative