2014 Youth Assessment Community Stakeholders Meeting

October 7, 2014, 6:00-8:00 PM at Dryden Town Hall

Facilitated by Dryden Recreation and Youth Commission

Results of full assessment will be available on Town website or by contacting anyone from the DRYC. Targeted completion – early 2015.

*Please introduce yourself and your program/agency; if applicable, tell us the ages of youth you interact with.*

Community members present:

Patty Ard (PA) – Dryden Youth Opportunity Fund

Paul Streeter (PS) – Dryden Youth Opportunity Fund & Sertoma

Shelley Lester (SL) – CCE Dryden Youth Services

David Hall (DH) – CCE Dryden Youth Services

Don Scutt (DS) – Kiwanis baseball

Sandy Sherwood (SS) and husband Louis Gotto (LG) – Dryden Central School District

Mike Watkins (MW) – Dryden Police Dept.

Mary Ann Sumner (MS) – Town of Dryden Supervisor

DRYC members/reps. present:

Stephanie Mulinos (SM)

Tracy Kurtz (TK)

Steve Meyer (SMy)

Erin Bieber (EB)

Kris Bennett (KB)

*First, what strengths and skills do you see in the Dryden youth and their families that you work with or are in contact with? How has this changed over the past 5 years?*

SS- Strengths- family involvement though some economic barriers; change kids and parents not accepting responsibility, view that things are now school responsibility rather than family. (social structure change). Work with agencies to provide supports. Need more focus on middle schoolers & building relationships.

LG – Kids are honest and open

DS – Strengths – change in that there’s a good corps of parents teaching good responsibility to kids. Change – parents enroll kids in too many programs, especially at young age. Overprogrammed.

MW – Strengths – kids’ knowledge of electronics; parents are connected with kids thru electronics (both a strength and a weakness). Challenge – electronics; social media, lack of monitoring. Law enforcement has lack of access to electronic info.

DH – Agrees that kids are overprogrammed but some kids don’t have any involvement. Some families are well connected to services but some have mental illness or other reason for less involvement with their kids.

SL – Strength – global awareness, kids and youth, because of technology. Challenge – changes in schools, more testing and Common Core had led to increased stress.

PS – Kids are more worldly, sophisticated, enthusiastic. Challenge – not enough kids get opportunities.

PA – Encouraged by numbers of kids

*What issues or challenges do you see facing Dryden youth and their families? How has this changed over the past 5 years?*

DH – Pattern of transience in youth, low income families move frequently leading to kids breaking bonds with friends, being the “new kid.” These kids need the most social skills (sometimes family mental health or substance use is a factor).

SS – School doesn’t even close files anymore when a student leaves the district, they may be back. The school offers a 5:00 “activity bus” for grades 6-12, increases access to after school involvement. Bus will drop off within ¼ mile of home.

PS – Transportation is a barrier to youth involvement. Some youth, especially low income, are isolated. Some resources such as Solar Express are reaching kids in need.

*Next, what troubling or challenging behaviors do you face in working with youth?*

DS – Troubling behaviors in youth – none. With parents: some don’ t have their priorities straight. Don’t get their kids to practices, games; don’t make sure they have needed equipment even though Kiwanis helps connect parents for carpooling and will provide gear to those in need.

MW – Sense of entitlement, unrealistically high expectations, lack of consequences for actions.

DH – Expectation of instant gratification. Need to be pushed to work toward longer term goals. Overweight and inactive kids.

SL – Lack of respect for themselves and others, no barriers when it comes to sharing what’s on their minds; oversharing can be a barrier to success.

SS – Kids don’t believe in themselves or in a positive future for themselves.

EB – Electronics are getting in the way of getting to know the people and community around them.

*What barriers do you face in working with the youth you serve?*

Multiple people – transportation, electronics

SS – Availability of mental health services in Dryden (transportation)

*What community services or programs are you aware of that you value and that benefit youth?*

MW – After school programs, BOCES vocational programs , sports

DH – Great options available; Jr. Fire Academy (started as part of his program, is now a stand-alone); sports and rec. options through Dryden Rec. Dept.; BOCES; Scouting; New Roots is a good option for some kids he works with

DS – 4-H, Scouting, BOCES vocational programs

PS – Schools; CCE; DYOF allows community to be involved; Rec. Dept. offers a good foundation of programming; library

MS – Purple Lion ice cream shop is sorely missed; provided ops. for youth employment that are needed.

*What community services or programs are needed?*

MW – Skateboarding instruction and other extreme sports/games, better skate park.

PS – Improved coordination between existing community organizations would create less isolation and leverage success; have the community agree on and take on a challenge (i.e. obesity)

SS – Place for kids to socialize outside of school

MS – Youth employment opportunities (would love to see the old dollar store near the school converted into a combo community/youth center and entrepreneurial venture with youth jobs)

DS – More opportunities for volunteerism through community services; parents act as role models for kids

DH – At LACS where his son attends school, community service is a school requirement; might Dryden consider this?

SL – Opportunities for sincere youth leadership and youth voice.

*What gets in the way of youth being able to access programs or services?*

PA, SL, MW – Transportation

SL – Kids are not into “old school” stuff and want new, alternative activities and sports

MW – The Dryden community is safe but don’t let kids take risks. People are more protective now (people know about Amber Alerts, bad things that could happen).

SM – Kids don’t walk as much anymore, concerns for safety

SS – Kids don’t have a vision of a positive future for themselves

TK – Need a community calendar where all info can be shared and accessed

MS – Need a volunteer coordinator

SL – Proposes a youth employment position to work on the website/community calendar

*What are the 3 best things about Dryden for young people?*

DH – Location (beautiful outdoor options, close to Cornell, Dryden Lake, Sciencenter). Café has helped the community feel more cohesive. Dryden can make things happen.

SL – DRYC concerned with making things better for youth, to stay on top of issues & trends

PS – Good size, not too big, feels like a community

PA – Good variety, after school programs

SS – Willingness of caring adults outside the family to be involved with kids

DS – Schools, pride in schools and community, safe community, good parent support

MW – Location, good size, schools, safe community

*What 3 things would you change about Dryden to make it a better place for young people?*

PS – More “less organized” opportunities for young people

SS – Safe places for kids to hang out

DH – 40 Developmental Assets plan got lost. Let community adults know how they can make a difference in kids’ lives.

SM – Dryden is more cohesive, better sense of community in recent years, increased diversity

DS – Get people including kids involved in the community

MW – Rec. hall; central, fun gathering place; sports for the next generation (X-sports); school resource officer

*Finally, how can the Town of Dryden help with all that we’ve discussed this evening?*

(see above)