



Gilbert Park Going Places

A High-Risk Behaviour Prevention Project

Background

- Gilbert Park is a Manitoba Housing complex located in the northwest corner of Winnipeg in the Inkster community.
- Gilbert Park is the most populous Manitoba Housing in Manitoba with a population of 849 residents. Approximately 68% of the population is under 23.

What were the issues?

- 1 youth suicide in 2004 .
- 3 youth suicides from fall 2005 to fall 2006.
- 1 youth suicide of a former resident in spring 2006. Youth had friends in community that felt impact.
- Various reports of suicide attempts and ideation.
- Fall 2006 fire setting incident involving 14-year-old
- boy locked in a shed that was then lit on fire by other youth.
- Fire setting incident of vacant apartment in October 2006.

What were the issues?

- Consistent (weekly) reports of bullying behaviour from youth in Gilbert Park.
- Significant evidence of youth sexual exploitation and sexual activity.
- Significant evidence of drinking and drug use among minors.
- Lack of opportunity for youth activities or programs in Gilbert Park or surrounding area.
- Identified at community and service level lack of youth mental health, youth therapy, youth activities and youth engagement programs available in the community

Intervention Strategies

- The development of the Gilbert Park High Risk Behaviour Prevention Initiative (originally focused specifically on suicide and then included other high risk behaviours)
- A team was formed with to discuss the high incidence of youth suicide and other high-risk behaviours in the Gilbert Park Community and review intervention strategies.
- Partners include: Nor'West, WRHA public health and mental health, MATC, Manitoba Housing, Family Services and Housing, and Shaughnessy Park School.

Intervention Strategies

- The team researched and reviewed best practice strategies to address high risk behaviour.
- The 16 point prevention plan outlined in the Michael Chettleburgh book 'Young Thugs' was ultimately chosen as the most effective strategy for this project.
- The strategy was fairly comprehensive with a focus on partnerships, community development, social inclusion and youth programs.

Framework for Project

- The team reviewed what was already happening in the community in relation to the strategy and then picked gap areas it could address such as youth programming, outreach, mentoring and counselling.
- A proposal for a project called Gilbert Park Going Places was submitted to and funded by Family Services and Housing in fall 2007.

Project Description

- The project funding enabled Nor'West to hire 2 social workers and 2 Skill Development Workers to develop and implement a program which would impact high risk behavior in Gilbert Park. The project was named Gilbert Park Going Places and was supported by Nor'West and WRHA staff as well as the steering committee.

Project Description

- The steering committee consulted with Michael Chettleburgh to develop a strategy that had a high chance of success. Michael assisted the committee to work with youth and community to develop an overall strategy that would prevent high-risk behaviour.
- The strategy included counselling, family support, peer mentoring, life skills development, and arts and recreation programming.

Outcomes

- Healthy and resilient youth in Gilbert Park
- Increase in healthy coping skills and creative problem solving among youth and families.
- Improved level of life skills.
- Families indicate more positive interaction with the family unit and community
- Opportunities to attend such programs as Triple P, violence prevention, youth therapeutic programs and skill development programs

Outcomes

- Decrease in incidences of bullying and violence
- Decrease in high risk behaviours
- Youth actively participating in youth advisory and utilizing leadership skills
- Youth active in mentoring other youth in healthy behaviours, problem solving and skill development

Outcomes to date

- More than 100 youth registered to date
- Consistent youth attendance
- 2 youth advisories held with as many as 30 youth in attendance
- First wave of Peer Mentoring completed with 4 graduates, Second wave with 4 in attendance
- New partnerships (ex.SPIN) in programming