



CITY OF VANCOUVER

OTHER REPORT

Report Date: January 20, 2009  
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Meeting Date: February 19, 2009

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets  
FROM: Family Court/Youth Justice Committee  
SUBJECT: Family Court/Youth Justice Committee Annual Report for the Year 2008

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT this report be received for information.

**CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The City Manager submits the foregoing for INFORMATION.

**PURPOSE**

To provide Vancouver City Council with a report on the activities of the Family Court/Youth Justice Committee (FCYJC) for the period of January 1 to December 31, 2008.

**BACKGROUND**

The Vancouver Family Court/Youth Justice Committee (FC/YJ) is appointed by City Council annually. This role is delegated to Municipalities by the Provincial and Federal governments. Family Court and Youth Justice Committees' authority and duties are set out in Provincial and Federal Legislation. Section 5 of the *Provincial Court Act* establishes the Family Court Committee. Youth Justice Committees are appointed pursuant to Section 18 of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, which came into force in April 2003.

The Committee reports annually to the Attorney General of British Columbia and to Vancouver City Council regarding its work. Reports are also forwarded to Justice Canada.

The Committee's duties are to:

- examine and consider resources available in the community for families, children and youth, professionals working with this population and young offenders;
- assist the Court when requested in individual cases referred to the Committee;
- make recommendations to the Court, to the Attorney General, to the City Council or to others, as required;
- act as a Family Court when required; and
- provide leadership on youth justice, family, and social issues.

### *Structure*

In 2008, 23 advisory committee members were appointed by City Council. See Appendix A for the list of committee members, liaison members, City staff and interested parties.

The Committee divided its responsibilities among subcommittees which reported back monthly to the Committee as a whole on activities and for approval of any initiatives to be undertaken by the subcommittee. Appendix B outlines individual subcommittee goals.

The four subcommittees for the 2008 term were:

- i. Family Court Subcommittee
- ii. Youth Exchange Subcommittee
- iii. Youth Access to Legal Education Subcommittee
- iv. Youth at Risk Subcommittee

## DISCUSSION

### 1. Guest Presenters

The following people made presentations to the Committee as a whole:

<b>Names of Presenters</b>	<b>Subject</b>
Inspector Scott Thompson, Youth Services Unit, Vancouver Police Department	Mandatory Youth Detox Models - initiatives in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba
Chris Beresford, Director - Maintenance and Locate Services, Justice Services Branch, Ministry of Attorney General	His Liaison and Ministry's role in assisting municipal family court/youth justice committees
Richard Boulier, Executive Committee Chair, Metro Vancouver Dream Centre	Dream Centres' mandate and the fundraising campaign to build one in Vancouver
Ian Mitchell, Coordinator - Prostitution Offender Program of BC, John Howard Society	Program alternative within the justice system, and youth prostitution issues covered in educate-the-johns sessions
Diane Sowden, Founder and Executive Director, Children of the Street Society	Sexual exploitation of youth, and challenges in addressing youth addiction and prostitution

Booth Palmer, Citywide Coordinator, Child & Youth Recreation Services, Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation, and Ivy Vuu, Community Youth Worker, West End Community Centre	Youth development through recreation services; programs for at-risk youth; crime prevention and deterrence; and review of Alberta's Incarceration vs Recreation study.
Mike White, Community Services Manager - Youth Services, Ministry of Children and Family Development	Overview of the Provincial Government's services for at risk youth.

## 2. Significant Activities:

Significant turnover in membership between 2007 and 2008, including the entire executive, resulted in the committee spending some time discussing and investigating the mandate of the committee, prior to delving into substantive committee work. Towards the end of the year the committee also put some of its attention towards succession planning so to allow for a more streamline start to committee work in years to come. In addition to this organizational work, the committee's substantive work was carried out through its subcommittees, as outlined below.

The following are reports on the activities of the subcommittees of the 2008 term:

### *i. Family Court Subcommittee*

The 2007 Family Court Subcommittee commenced a critique of the [www.multilingolegal.ca](http://www.multilingolegal.ca) website. The goal was to critique the existing website on the issues of accessibility, availability and ease of navigation for ESL family court litigants in Vancouver. This work was continued by the 2008 Family Court Subcommittee and completed.

The Family Court Subcommittee also investigated the feasibility of having a **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program model** in the Canadian context. The Family Court Subcommittee began the initial groundwork for establishing a volunteer group to represent the best interests of children who are removed from their homes and/or are under court supervision.

### *ii. Youth Exchange Subcommittee*

An early achievement of the Subcommittee was the development of a Youth Partnership Approach intended to engage youth to vision, plan and activate Youth Exchange opportunities that would result in a Youth Roundtable Forum for Youth Justice. The aim was to provide an open, respectful and safe place for youth voices to be heard and recognized with the intention that this dialogue would inform the work of the Vancouver FCYJ Committee. An initial Forum conference plan was put together and a budget request of \$300 was approved by the FCYJC.

As the year unfolded it became clear that there was a need to make the plan more sustainable and enduring. This brought about some rethinking on how best to launch the premier event. The first Youth Justice Dialogue will take place at the Britannia Teen Centre early in the New Year and a revised partnership plan is now in place to span that out to other Community Centres.

*iii. Youth Access to Legal Education Subcommittee*

The Subcommittee focused on **youth at risk accessing legal education programs** and law court resources. The Subcommittee set about evaluating the Law Courts Education Society (LCES) programs and resources for youth, especially the use of the LCES' Courtlink Youth Program. A survey was sent to teachers of high school law and civics classes in the Fall of 2008, and the Subcommittee is currently in the process of analyzing the results and will report back to the LCES. The Subcommittee will also be sending a letter to other Family Court/Youth Justice Committees in British Columbia to promote awareness of the LCES' programs.

*iv. Youth at Risk Subcommittee*

This Subcommittee is specifically concerned with the experience of **youth at risk in the city** of Vancouver, with a special reference to the social impacts that may arise for this group in light of the upcoming 2010 Olympic Games. The Subcommittee came into existence based on the view that the particular situation and experiences of youth at risk put this group in a vulnerable position. Our concern is that the City has not paid enough attention to this area, thus we intend to serve as a liaison between the City and youth on these issues.

During the past season, Subcommittee tasks have included: (i) continuing to liaise with various community initiatives and groups who work with youth at risk in the Vancouver area; and (ii) distributing surveys to different youth agencies in Vancouver to gather information concerning the expected impact of the 2010 Olympics on youth at risk.

In addition to the four Subcommittees mentioned above, the Committee provided input to:

*a. South Fraser Family Court and Youth Justice Committee*

The South Fraser Family Court and Youth Justice Committee made a request to the Province of British Columbia to legislate that parents or guardians of children involved in substance misuse could place their child in detoxification, with or without the child's consent. The SFFCYJC asked other FCYJC in the province for support. The Vancouver FCYJC considered the request and after some discussion and debate, the VFCYJC responded by letter to the City of Langley asking for more information about how they reached their decision. At this time the VFCYJC has not reached consensus about support for the request and are inviting further information and dialogue concerning the matter.

*b. Provincial Family Court/Youth Committee*

The Chair of the Vancouver FCYJC is the Committee's representative on the Provincial FC/YJ Committee. Projects initiated by this provincial group, with assistance of the Attorney General's Office, include facilitating communication in regards to activities and orientation for municipal FC/YJ committees and workshop planning.

*c. FCYJC Website*

The website was developed by 2007 FCYJC and sustained during the 2008 year. The purpose of the website is to provide information to the public about the committee and its work. The website is also a tool for dialogue with the public by providing a

place where people can post a comment or pose a question to the committee.  
<http://fcyj.wordpress.com/>

d. *"In Your Face" Conference for Youth Workers*

A representative of the Youth Exchange Subcommittee sat on the Planning Committee for the 2008 Fall Conference organized by the BC Recreation and Parks Association and local municipalities, including the City of Vancouver. The main purposes of the conference were to provide learning opportunities for youth workers through key note speakers and workshops, and to facilitate networking and community building among different organizations that service youth around the province.

### 3. Future Directions

The Committee recommends that the following projects continue in 2009:

- researching an organizational model for Vancouver similar to the *Court Appointed Special Advocates* (CASA) program used in the U.S. and other countries;
- extend the Youth Justice Dialogue sessions initiated at the Britannia Teen Centre to other Community Centres and solidify the Youth Exchange Partnership.
- explore sustainable participant reporting mechanisms to ensure that the input generated by the Youth Exchange process becomes meaningful to the main FCYJ Committee and its other subcommittees;
- follow-up on the Youth Access to Legal Education Subcommittee's school survey and work with the Law Courts Education Society (LCES) to bring awareness to the LCES programs designed for students and at-risk youth
- evaluate the effectiveness of the LCES programs offered to students and at-risk youth including the following programs:
  - (i) *Courtlink Youth Program* - A hands-on educational experience for youth-at-risk that emphasizes the consequences of breaking the law;
  - (ii) *Justice System Education Program* - School and Community groups take part in court orientations, mock trial, judge's sessions and more at a courthouse;
  - (iii) *Choices and Consequences* - An intensive program for youth, ages 11-14, who are facing school suspension for making poor choices.
- finalize the Youth at Risk Subcommittee's research report on the "Impact of the 2010 Olympics on youth at risk in Vancouver" which began with the 2006/07 Youth at Risk Subcommittee.

### CONCLUSION

The foregoing information is presented to Vancouver City Council for information.

## APPENDIX A

### 2008 Committee Members

Elizabeth Bowen  
Ellen Curran (*resigned*)  
Ashley de Regil  
E. Murphy Fries  
Anne Marie Goodfellow (*resigned*)  
Mark Gueffroy, TREASURER  
Amber Hitchen  
Douglas Kendall  
Paula Kueng, CHAIR  
Tess Lawson, VICE-CHAIR  
Jacky Leung  
Alexandra MacGregor  
Bryan MacLeod  
Slavica Malagurski  
Ken McFarlane (*resigned*)  
Joel Milgram  
Janet Nicol  
Dana Roberts  
Ceone Veldman, VICE-CHAIR (*resigned*)  
Mark Warwas (*resigned*)  
Ashley Webster (*resigned*)  
Parrish Wilson  
Tommy Zhao (*resigned*)

#### Liaisons:

Tom Harapnuick, Vice-Principal, Vancouver School Board Representative  
Inspector Scott Thompson, Youth Services Unit, Vancouver Police Department

#### Staff:

Booth Palmer, Citywide Coordinator, Child & Youth Recreation Services, Park Board  
Debbie Anderson Eng, Child & Youth Planner, Social Planning  
Steven Dang, Social Planner, Social Planning  
Julianna Torjek, Youth Outreach Team Coordinator, Social Planning  
Mary Clare Zak, Director, Social Planning

## APPENDIX B

### *Vancouver Family Court/Youth Justice Committee*

#### 2008 Subcommittee Goals & Objectives:

##### FAMILY COURT SUBCOMMITTEE

1. To complete the critique of the Multilingolegal.ca website as was commenced by the 2007 Family Court Subcommittee.
2. To explore the viability of a Court Appointed Special Advocacy (CASA) program in Vancouver and if viable, to work towards its creation and implementation.

##### YOUTH LIAISON/YOUTH EXCHANGE SUBCOMMITTEE

1. Develop a diverse and representative planning process that invites and includes youth voices to participate in larger exchanges.
2. To host a larger exchange forum that gives youth from a variety of backgrounds the opportunity to make their thoughts and feelings known and valued around youth and justice issues of importance to them.
3. To actively engage the main committee in developing a better understanding of youth's perspectives in Vancouver.

##### YOUTH AT RISK SUBCOMMITTEE

1. To act as liaison between the FCYJC committee and community organizations, frontline workers, government structures/programs involved with issues of youth at risk and, where possible, youth at risk themselves.
2. To obtain a sound knowledge basis in regards to the issues that youth at risk face in Vancouver, specifically as they pertain to the upcoming 2010 Olympics.
3. To provide avenues through which youth at risk and other relevant community organizations can express their views and share their information with the general public.

##### YOUTH ACCESS TO LEGAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

1. To learn which groups of youth access the Law Courts Education Society's (LCES) Programs and Resources for Youth.
2. To assess the effectiveness of the LCES' Programs and Resources for Youth.
3. To determine whether there are gaps in the LCES' Programs and Resources for Youth.