

"Apples and Dictionaries"

A REPORT ON THE ROTARY CLUB/ROBERT LAND SCHOOL PROJECT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report, we will present information which evaluates the impact of the Rotary Club's efforts in the Keith Community from the perspective of the citizens, the school and the Rotarians; we will highlight challenges faced by each of these groups in creating and sustaining this partnership; and we will present recommendations for future directions for Rotarian involvement in this community. We will also discuss how the Rotarians were guided by the community capacity building concepts of John McKnight (1995).

The information for this report was gathered from reviewing six years of minutes from the Inner City Schools Committee as well as conducting five focus groups and one key informant interview. The four questions that guided the interviews and focus groups were: 1) What was most important to you about having the Rotarians be a part of the Keith community? 2) What changes have been put into place as result of Rotarian involvement? 3) What would you like to see done in the community? 4) What role do you see the Rotarians play in this?

The people of the Keith community deal with a lower average household income than the rest of the City of Hamilton, a higher unemployment rate than the City of Hamilton average, and a higher percentage of people with ethnic backgrounds (1996 Census data). In 1997, the Inner City Schools Committee began to support this community by collaborating with Robert Land School. Since inception, this collaboration has produced a large variety of programs to support the community including redevelopment of a local park, a homework club for kids and providing equipment for the Mom's community kitchen.

All three groups (Rotarians, community and school) identified that mobilizing volunteers and financial resources was central to the work that was being achieved in the Keith community. All three groups commented that the process of creating the partnership was also central to the work. The Rotarians believed that changes in the neighbourhood resulted from an increase in resources, community involvement, an increased profile of the community needs and from the fact that the community is being listened to. The community found that working with the Rotarians has led to them feeling worthwhile and supported in realizing their capacity. Finally, and this theme cannot be understated, the support from the principal of the school was crucial to the success of this project.

The school noted that creating a relationship with the Rotarians is a slow trust building process that is dependent on mutual learning. In addition, the school noted that it is essential that the school board and principal identify community partnerships as a priority and as part of their strategic direction. The Rotarians identified that lack of continuity at the school board level creates a barrier in project movement, as it requires the committee to continually reorient and engage people in the vision of the project. The Rotarians and the school also identified the need for more Rotary club member support for the project but that the club has a history of partnerships that were more oriented to generating financial resources and less involved in "hands on" community work.

The data in this report clearly illustrates the impact that the Rotarians have had in this neighbourhood. By choosing to partner with the community, the Rotarians engaged in a process of affirming the capacity that is inherent in each person and in the neighbourhood as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

In 1992 the Rotary Club of Hamilton assigned a priority to the needs of inner city neighbourhoods and the agencies that serviced them. In keeping with their strategic direction, a focus on disadvantaged youth emerged and led ultimately to the creation of the Child Poverty Task Force, which is the predecessor to the Inner City School Committee (John Frid, May 29th, 2002, verbal communication). The Inner City School Committee is comprised of Rotarians, community members interested in the concept of community development and a Public Health Nurse.

In 1997 a Rotarian from this committee approached an elementary principal at Robert Land School, in the Keith neighbourhood, and asked, “What can we do to help”? The simple request for “apples and dictionaries” has developed into a proud community driven partnership between the Rotary Club of Hamilton and the citizens of the Keith Community with the majority of activities pertaining to the students at this school (Len Saltmarsh, verbal communication, April 28th, 2002).

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The goal of this report is three-fold. First we will present information, which evaluates the impact of the Rotary’s efforts in the Keith Community from the perspective of the citizens, the school and the Rotarians. Second, we will highlight challenges faced by each of these groups in creating and sustaining this partnership. Finally, we will present recommendations for future directions for Rotarian involvement in this community.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Who are the people of the Keith Community?

This north-central neighbourhood of Hamilton has shown a steady population decline with a negative population growth of -7.9% from 1991 to 1996. As well, average household income is \$11,000 less than the City of Hamilton average. Age distribution is relatively similar to the overall Hamilton age cohort figures showing an increase in 35 – 54 year olds as well as 29% of the population being under 19 years of age in 1996. Unemployment rates are higher than the City of Hamilton at 12.6 % versus 9.1% for the City (Census Canada, 1996). A higher percent of English, French, and Portuguese ethnic backgrounds reside in Keith neighbourhood than the City of Hamilton, with the only visible minority population higher than the City average being the Southeast Asian community. Many of the students at the school belong to new immigrant families with English as a second language (Hamilton-Wentworth Community Planning and Development Division, May 1999).

What was the thinking that led to the Rotary Club using a community driven approach?

The Inner City Committee became introduced to John McKnight's (1995) community capacity building concepts early on in their partnership with the community. It is the goal of this section to give a brief overview of a few key concepts that have influenced the Rotarians in moving from a cheque writing process to actually engaging in building relationships and capacity in the community.

Central to McKnight's (1995) work is the idea that all people have natural capacities that can be mobilized for community renewal. How the community is approached, by either a deficiency model or a capacity model determines the outcome of the relationship. McKnight believes that professionals break down the fabric of building community capacity by superimposing their professional or institutional agenda on

people's lives. The professional lives in a world of believing they "know" the problems and then they seek to "fix" the community. This deficiency model is what causes the bonds to falter in building communities up.

By choosing to partner with the community and acknowledging the capacities that make up that neighborhood, and each person in the neighborhood, the Rotarians engaged in a process of affirming, that which is inherent in each person's capacity. McKnight (1995) introduces people to the idea of a "community guide". Guides do not name the problems in the community, the community does. He further states "guides are unique, unschooled in their efforts, and informed by their own individual creativity and insight" (McKnight, 1995, p. 119). A guide's role is to build relationships. "They bring a person into the web of [community] life that can be a powerful force in that person's life. They bring the individual into life as a citizen by incorporating him into relationships where his capacities can be expressed – where he is not simply defined by his "deficiencies" (McKnight, 1995, p. 120).

McKnight (1995) notes that guides are well connected within the community and can build on those relationships. This connection supports them in mobilizing resources, be it human or financial, quickly. Guides know people who know other people. This is why most guides come from community life rather than service systems. The level of connectedness that exists in the network of community creates a level of trust that supports goals being met as opposed to institutional authority.

HOW DID WE WRITE THIS REPORT?

Who wrote this report?

A Public Health Nurse from Social and Public Health Services, in partnership with a community member wrote this report. In addition, citizens from the community, Rotarians and the school principal provided editorial support.

Where did we get our information?

Information was gathered from six years of minutes from the Inner City Schools Committee. The hired community member reviewed the minutes to highlight the activities (see results section on projects to date) and to better understand the history of the relationship between the Rotary Club, the school and the community.

Five focus groups and one key informant interview were conducted. Two focus groups with Rotarians were conducted, with a total of 3 current Rotarians and 2 ex-Rotarians. Two focus groups were conducted with community members, with one senior, two working males, 3 working mothers and 2 stay at home mothers participating. The fifth focus group was made up of a school principal, a school social worker and a teacher. Also, one key informant interview was conducted with a Rotarian who chairs the Inner City School Committee.

At each focus group there was a facilitator and a recorder who wrote down key ideas that answered the questions. All participants were told they did not have to answer questions if they did not wish to and that they could stop at any time. In addition, they were told that no names would be included in the report and that only aggregate information would be reported.

What did we ask?

The Public Health Nurse asked four main questions to guide the interviews and focus groups: 1) What was most important to you about having the Rotarians be a part of

the Keith community? 2) What changes have been put into place as result of Rotarian involvement? 3) What would you like to see done in the community? 4) What role do you see the Rotarians play in this?

How did we sort the answers to the questions?

Thoughts and ideas were sorted under each of the questions used. These responses were then grouped into main themes. A quote from each group is used to support the emergence of each theme. All supporting data can be found in the appendices.

RESULTS

Two sources of data comprise this section. The first data source was six years of minutes from the Inner City Committee meetings that were reviewed to highlight the projects that have been undertaken. The second data source was the focus groups and interviews.

Minutes

The following projects were identified from a review of the minutes:

- In 1999 the community saw the first hands on project, which involved the greening of the school playground
- Redevelopment of Mars Community Park – a \$5,000 contribution from the Rotarians that was supported financially from the City of Hamilton, which resulted in a \$60,000 playground, being built instead of a baseball diamond that saw little use by the community.
- Peer mentoring by Rotarians who contributed an hour a week in assisting with literacy and math skills for students

- Christmas Breakfast has been organized since 1999 and Rotarians have ensured that there are small gifts for all the students at the school
- 1,028 students have been able to participate in day trip activities over the past 3 years. This number prior to Rotary involvement was 0.
- For two years in a row there has been a presentation of music in the park – “Jazz on Mars” – where high school and elementary bands participate in friendly competition. This event is held during school hours and into the early evening enabling the entire community to participate. The community, according to their own determined needs, used fund-raising proceeds from this event.
- The Art Gallery of Hamilton offered an eight-week art program for students via the co-ordinating efforts of The Rotary Club
- The homework club has been provided with a new TV and VCR as well as second hand computers.
- Since 2001 the Rotarians have taken two classes on a conservation walking tour which finishes with a BBQ provided by Rotary Club.
- The Mom’s kitchen was provided with a stove.
- Since 2001 the Rotary club has funded the YMCA to lead a 3:1 arts, crafts and gym program at Robert Land.
- A homework club was started in 2002 to provide support for children with their homework – this was identified after a lengthy search to find a project that would be identified as a “Major Project” for the Rotary Club of Hamilton. The homework club is administered by the YMCA and is offered four evenings each week. Fund-raising efforts from the YMCA also covers the direct costs of this program.

- In 2001 the three-week Summer Literacy commenced in four elementary schools. Sanford, King George, Gibson and Robert Land. Thirty children at each site are assisted in the preparation for getting back to school endeavouring to overcome the learning lag that occurs for some children over the summer months. This program was funded by the City of Hamilton, The Hamilton Community Foundation (in the first year) The Rotary Club of Hamilton and administered by The Hamilton YWCA.
- Annually the Rotary Club of Hamilton is contributing over \$30,000.00 to the various projects and matching funding opportunities in the Keith Community. Rotary Club dollars have helped leverage grants from the Hamilton Community Foundation, the City of Hamilton, private donors and The Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family Foundation, more than doubling the Rotary Club contribution annually.

Focus Group Results

The remainder of the results section presents main thoughts that were discussed in the focus groups and interview. Appendix A is an in-depth analysis of how the answers below were formed. New thoughts or ideas surfaced in the interviews that were not related to the interview questions. These ideas have been included in the discussion section as they assist in identifying challenges or barriers to the Rotarians, community and service providers developing a working partnership.

What was most important to you about having the Rotarians be a part of the Keith community?

All three groups (Rotarians, community and school) identified that mobilizing volunteers and financial resources was central to the work that was being achieved in the

Keith community. All three groups commented that the process of creating the partnership was also central to the work.

The Rotarians and the school identified that people helping themselves was vital. One participant from the school shared that when the park was being rejuvenated, the Rotarians and the community worked together to design and build the park - the community brought in a digger while the Rotarians helped with the planning and funding side. Rotarians discussed the importance of establishing a partnership built on trust and respect and that supports the community in feeling important and not alone as essential components of an effective partnership. Meanwhile the community identified that being listened to was very important to them.

The school added that the persistence and advocacy skills of the Rotarians were key to the success of this project. The Rotarians identified that being on-site, accessible, and making a difference in the lives of children was significant for them. One Rotarian noted, “Unless people (Rotary and community workers) move into the Keith community nothing will change”. Finally, and this theme cannot be understated, the support and acceptance of community involvement in the school from the principal of the school was crucial to the success of this project.

What changes have been put into place as a result of Rotarian involvement?

Each of the three groups answered this question from a unique perspective. The Rotarians believed that changes in the neighbourhood resulted from an increase in resources, community involvement, an increased profile of the community needs and from the fact that the community is being listened to.

The community found that working with the Rotarians has led to them feeling worthwhile and supported in realizing their capacity. In fact, one person said that when they feel worthwhile they go home and become a better parent. A second community member identified that Rotarians, by bringing outsiders into the community, have helped the community get stronger. "Outsiders see the strengths and we are acknowledged for this". As a result of working with the Rotarians the community discussed feeling better able to move through systems and organizations in order to help themselves. They noted an increase in their children's confidence and ability at school and said that their children were less restless. One participant from the community shared that the Rotary helped set up a homework club and there is positive feedback from parents. She added, "many parents are not always available after school to help with homework due to working hours". Furthermore, the community participants identified an increased sense of community. One participant said "community involvement creates more communication...the whole community participates, bringing people and the community closer together". Finally, the community reported that there is an increase in financial resources, which has led to the expansion of current programs and the development of new programs (e.g. the day camp, beautifying the park, having a Jazz Festival, the literacy program, reading programs, and money is raised for the school).

For the school, changes in the community were identified in terms of projects (e.g. Children's Christmas party and breakfast, support of the mom's group, establishing a reading program, rejuvenation of the playground). Finally, the school noted that parents in the mom's group were more empowered in their lives as a result of Rotarian involvement. One participant from the school noted that before the mom's group, parents

were too intimidated to volunteer time or speak to teachers... "the mom's group provides a supportive, non-judgmental atmosphere".

What would you like to see happen in the Keith community?

Participants from focus groups responded to the question, "What would you like to see happen in the Keith community?" with 2 main responses. The school and Rotarians identified the need to establish a local advocate for this community. One participant from the school said "a local advocate could help people get heat turned back on, get referrals to counselling or help them with Ontario Works". In addition, the school noted the need for more parental involvement and an accessible grocery store.

The community identified the need for ongoing financial support to develop support services and programs in the neighbourhood. A few examples noted by participants were: the need for an accessible paediatrician and physicians; affordable transportation to medical appointments; affordable medications; programs for teens, seniors, and adults; more police officers walking the beat; a neighbourhood Tim Horton's and many more recreational activities. (For a more detailed list refer to the Appendix). Discussing limited transportation to appointments, community members identified that parents on a low income have to take all their children out of school for an appointment because of day care issues. It is sometimes less expensive for all of them (5) to take a taxi rather than the bus. Also the amount of time that bus transportation can take if transfers are required is excessive. "Sometimes it's one and half-hours on the bus".

How do you see the Rotarians being involved in the Keith Community in the future?

When each of the participants in the three groups were asked this question, all three discussed the need for Rotarians to continue mobilizing resources to meet the

communities identified needs. The community and the school also noted the need for the Rotarians to continue to act as advocates in having these needs met. One community member reported that they need an advocacy centre because if parents do not receive help neither will their children in the long run. They said they needed help to build the family base. A Rotarian noted “we need somebody who does this (advocacy) as a job so they can move forward in a fast way. We need dedicated time, and commitment...for many of us this [work] is an add on”.

All three groups identified the need for an increase in community involvement at either the neighbourhood or wider community level. To meet this need the community asked for the Rotarians to provide resources for transportation and babysitting costs. The Rotarians identified the need to expand or share the leadership role with others. The school focus group agreed with one participant observing that the Rotarians often do the “good” jobs and that parents would like to be supported in doing things other than just lice checks.

The school and the Rotarians identified the need to expand on the work that is being done in the school to the neighbourhood and other communities. One Rotarian participant discussed “the priority has been kids. We need to look at the connection between helping parent/families and supporting them in helping their children. People can not understand that helping parents helps kids”.

New Findings

New data that emerged highlighted the unique challenges in creating and sustaining this partnership for all three groups (school, Rotarians and the community). In

addition, information that evaluated two existing community based programs that are supported by Rotarians has been included.

The school noted that creating a relationship with the Rotarians is a slow trust building process that is dependent on mutual learning, school driven activities (which are board and principal sanctioned) and building on an existing relationship between the school and community in a strong child centred school. In other words, the Rotarians must proceed slowly in entering into a school system and work on building trust. One participant in the school focus group noted that having a Rotarian in the classroom is intimidating for staff and requires that they (the teachers) take a risk to do so. Rotarians need to be open to learn about this system, while supporting the school with activities that the school identifies as needs. In the case of this school, the Rotarians became involved in a school with a history of community outreach through the school social worker that had been involved with this community for 16 years. When the school principal asked for support in obtaining apples and dictionaries, this simple request became the beginning of a partnership that has grown over the years to become a diverse network of programs and partnerships. In addition, the school noted that it is essential that the school board and principal identify community partnerships as a priority and as part of their strategic directions.

The Rotarians and the school also identified the need for more club member support for the project. The challenges facing the Rotarians in being the source of this partnership are complex. Not only are the Rotarians from the Inner City Committee the source of the Keith communities transformation (financially and with human manpower) but they are members in a club with a history of partnerships that were more oriented to

generating financial resources and less involved in "hands on" community work. This divergence in approach has put the Inner City Committee in a place of leadership in changing the paradigm within the club. Growth for this project is dependent on the need for more support from club members in this new approach to business. This support can take the form of more people willing to volunteer hands on time in the community or in being open to this new way of doing business. The issue of skill development to work on this project may be a barrier for some club members as may be the location of the work for those people who are less comfortable or familiar with working in the Inner City. It was noted that many of the people who do hands on work have in fact been raised in these areas.

In addition, the Rotarians have identified that the current focus of supporting children exclusively has limitations in community work. Parents want to be helped with family issues so that they can better assist their children. This requires the Rotarians to expand their strategic direction to be more holistic in supporting the building blocks that form the foundation of children's lives.

Finally the Rotarians identified that lack of continuity at the Rotary Club board level creates a barrier in project movement, as it requires the committee to continually reorient and engage people in the vision of the project.

New data that emerged from the community focus groups shed light on one barrier for the community. They reported that the funders need to appreciate the time it takes to establish new programs. One participant said, "when they give us money for programs, like one of our seniors programs, it takes a while for people to realise what the

program is. Funders see few people and then we do not get more funding...it's frustrating - they don't get it".

Additional new information from the community highlighted the importance of two projects that the Rotarians support. The evaluation comments of these programs more reflected the program than the Rotarians and were therefore separated out. The community observed that the mom's group and homework club are positive supports in the community, which increase networking, ease the family burden and support children in their schoolwork. Parents share job opportunities and help with babysitting sick children. One community member noted that before the Rotary Club helped her children with their reading she was at her "wits end". She was tired of fighting with her children 3-4 days a week, and working 2-10 p.m. every day. In addition, she reported that the father was not good at schoolwork and could not help. A second person noted "they would rather have a root canal than read...so my child goes to the homework club with the Rotary and after 2 months my kid does homework on his own".

SUMMARY

The Keith community is a neighbourhood with a higher unemployment rate and lower income level than many areas in the City of Hamilton. Hence the finding that a significant role for the Rotary Club of Hamilton, in this community, has been to raise the profile of community issues through mobilizing and advocating for financial resources is noteworthy. Excellent examples of these roles is noted by the fact that the \$30,000.00 that is invested into this neighbourhood annually from the Rotarians is able to leverage, through grants, up to \$90,000.00 annually to support identified community needs. Also, the reality that school trips went from zero to 1,028 children over three years

demonstrates the power of the Rotary's ability to create opportunity for those who had little.

However, as important and possibly more important, is the sustainable impact of the relationships that Rotarians have established by bringing citizens into, what McKnight (1995) calls, the “web” of community life that exists both within the neighbourhood and in the City of Hamilton. Through these relationships, the Keith community is realising the capacity that is within the community and it’s members. Community members are left feeling connected to each other and the broader community. They feel capable and worthwhile because the Rotarians are not working from what McKnight calls a deficiency approach in their partnerships. In addition, parents feel their children are doing better at school and the burden to be solely responsible for children's schoolwork, given the reality of parents' educational level or work schedule, has been lifted for some.

Future roles for the Rotarians were identified in writing this report. One such role is the need to continue advocating for the community and to increase access to programs and services while building the leadership and the capacity in the neighbourhood. The school, which noted the need for Rotarians to support parents who want to become more involved in community issues, gave an example of how this role can be realized. They discussed that the Rotary Club may address barriers to citizen participation through increasing access to day-care or transportation and that Rotary members could do the lice checks which would allow more parents to read with their children in the homework club.

One key challenge in establishing this powerful relationship between the neighbourhood and the Rotary Club was working within the school system. Rotarians had

to proceed slowly and build trust with the school and the community. The presence of a supportive principal and a school board whose strategic plan included community partnerships was pivotal in having a place for Rotarians to focus their work in the beginning.

The need to grow this partnership outside of the school is identified by all three groups. The community's request that supports be put into place to build up the family unit requires the Rotarians to create a more comprehensive strategic vision beyond their current focus on children.

Finally, the process of building community capacity is a slow one that has the potential to create sustainable change. Wider club support with hands on work would mean more relationships are formed and more citizens are left feeling worthwhile and capable. It appears that the relationships are as meaningful to this partnership in creating change as the money is. This finding is the most exciting and could yield the greatest rewards in working to build sustainable communities.

References

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Extance, K. (1999). Report. Hamilton Wentworth Community Planning and Development Division.

Appendix A

SCHOOL BASED SERVICE PROVIDERS: FOCUS GROUP THEMES

What is most important about having the Rotarians be a part of the Keith community?

Main Theme:

- Rotarians are unrelenting in their advocacy for the community's needs - mobilising human and financial resources and partnerships to meet these needs while building on the strength of the community.

Sub themes:

Financial Resources

- Ongoing financial support for children in school, school programs, trips, plays, Christmas breakfast, nutritional fund and for community projects
- Rotarians help with money; Jill Rumble has applied for grants for homework clubs.

Human Resources

Volunteers are a big help. They are professional people with good literacy skills, committed on a regular basis, they come once a week for a several years.

Creating Partnerships

- Rotarian try to put (people) together it is political.
- Rotarian have involvement with Social Planning and Research.
- Rotarian have helped to make community partnership: YMCA, Broffman's award, Ham. Board of Education
- The Mom's group is a key group that the Rotarian's worked with and what they want for improvement....
- Rotarian's involved in and with people who are part of community.

Helping people help themselves

- Rotarians do more than just pass the money. The Rotarians are actively involved in helping people help themselves and helping school
- Like the park they worked on together to design. They had people in the community who actually brought a digger in and helped build the park. The Rotarian's provided money.

Rotary are local advocates

- The Rotarians are advocates with a good organizational structure who are involved in all aspects of the community.
- Parents don't have power, and influence. The Rotarians do.

Persistence of Rotary

- Rotarians do not give up. They continue to look for creative ways. They have a persistent attitude.

What changes have you seen as a result of the Rotary involvement?

School personnel responded to the question by listing projects. The projects were:

- Christmas party and breakfast with Christmas gifts for the kids.
- Helped establishing and support Mom's group
- reading program
- playground

Main Theme:

- parents in the Mom's/ community groups are supported in being empowered. The

Data to support this theme:

- Parents in the Mom's/ community groups are supported in being empowered
- Before the mom's group mom's were too intimidated to volunteer time or speak to teachers
- Now parents not threatened by staff, don't feel intimidate. The group provides a non-judgmental atmosphere

What would you like to see happen in the Keith neighbourhood?

2 Main themes:

- continue to involve parents and establish an advocate for the local community
- the need for a community grocery store.

Data to support 'continue to involve parents and establish an advocate for the local community':

- Increased involvement from parents
- Increase involvement with parents and build on supporting a commitment. There are only a very small number of people from community that volunteer, we need to have consistent and constant volunteers, as with Rotary club.
- Decrease the isolation – people are isolated, this is an isolated community – “It's like” rented houses...Many parents move around in neighbourhood.
- Get money to have a full time person to support community if school closes.
- A local advocate is required. The school social worker used to be full time and now is only available ½ day per week.
- The advocate also can help people from community get counselling and other help like get there heat back on, or help with there Ontario Works.
- Parents want help with immediate needs. For 12 years they had help via social work by now that time has been cut back.

Data to support ' the need for a community grocery store:

- More accessible grocery store because people must walk 1 mile to current store

What role can you see the Rotary club play in the future?

Main Theme:

- continue to listen to community needs and advocate for them while increasing the number of people / communities involved and building on the assets of the group

Sub themes

Duplicate this project in other areas

- Rotarian have helped to make community partnership and other people are jealous of the community partnerships
- Start to add resources to other schools

Continue to listen and advocate for community needs

- Rotarian will help facilitates getting people to help people get help
- Rotarian's are looking at what happens when this school closes as a result of parents expressed concern over this issue

Increase involvement with community and school

- Increase involvement with community and school (after school programs).

Support building the capacity of parents/students

- Parents think Rotarians get the better jobs in the school. They (Rotary) get to do reading programs and parents do lice checks. There is a perception that Rotary gets the good jobs and that they (parents) can not do certain jobs.
- We see the Rotarians helping to increasing the numbers of parents in the community as volunteers and to help put supports in place that will support their commitment.
- One child asked a Rotarian if he will be available to teach and to read with his children

New Data

First Main Theme

- creating a relationship with the Rotarians is a slow trust building process that is dependent on mutual learning, school driven activities which are board and principal sanctioned
- build on an existing relationship between the school and community in a strong child centred school

Sub themes and data that supports the main theme

- Building a trusting partnership between the principal/ teachers and Rotary is a slow process
- Having a Rotary person in a staff person's class room was intimidating for staff and required they take a risk in having an outsider in the class.

- I will not listen to complaints about staff. This is a process of building trust and confidence. Now there is a good relationship with Rotarian and teachers.
- The partnership started slowly and gradually with increased Rotarian involvement. We (school) set the tone, the pace.
- Staff saw it was working, helpful so now the partnership is now more open.
- Principal's role is pivotal in establishing a safe for place teachers to welcome outsiders.
- The security comes in knowing you are being viewed by outsiders as a teacher who is doing a good job.
- If principal or staff changes the process of creating trust and community has to start anew.

Rotarians are at the schools direction

- "Rotarian are at the schools direction"
- Rotarian work with the needs identified by schools.
- Rotarian are "support" they are not leaders of change
- Want to involve parents in literacy program for kids. We want support from parents. Parents need to be educated to help students. Rotarian's can't help. Parents are sensitive, need to be approached in a "certain way".

Principal support is key to establishing and sustaining partnership

- The principal encourages Rotarians and must acknowledge their hard work to keep them coming back.
- Its has to be a priority, part of my job to work with Rotarian. You need to believe... to accept people who are willing to help. I have to increase the level of trust. It takes a lot of work with Rotarian. I must invest my time and add to my work.
- This process needs to be a priority for the individual principal of the school.

Staff are child / parent centred in teaching

- Number 1 is that the staff works for kids. The staff has been here along time.
- The staff gives support to parents

The presence of a well established bridge between parents and the school

- There is a well-established (16 years in this project) relationship between the social worker and the school. The social worker interacts with parents in a way that teachers can't and bridges the gap between parents and school.
- The social worker worked with the mom's group for 8 years.
- Social worker speaks to parents as an advocate. It breaks down the barriers between the community into the school.

Staff support each other

- Staff very supportive of each other

Partnership needs to be a Board of Education to priority

- The board of education is beginning to look at developing partnerships. It is part of there strategic direction.

There is mutual learning

- Rotarian's get something out of it...we learn from them and they learn from us.
- Rotarians have an increased understanding of the complexities of the education process at this school.
- Rotarians have an increased appreciation for the work of the teachers.

Second Main Theme

- Rotarians need more club members to support the project.

Data below supported this theme:

- Division of support for project within Rotarians
- Inside the Rotary Club there is the perception that too much money is being spent at this school

KEITH COMMUNITY: FOCUS GROUP THEMES

What was most important to you about having the Rotarians be a part of the Keith community?

Main Theme:

- mobilising human and financial resources through listening to the community. The

Sub Themes:

Financial support

- “ the money helps”
- fundraising

Emotional support

- Being supported and helped
- The help

Rotary Listens

- Rotary listens to what we want for this neighbourhood and our kids

They make change happen by being here

- They help, bring about change. A lot of parent’s don’t want to volunteer / help. There are two parent and single parent families that need to spent time with their kids

What changes have occurred as a result of the Rotary involvement in the community?

First Main Theme:

- An increase in the community’s sense of feeling worthwhile and feeling powerful

Sub Themes:

Rotary being here makes me feel worthwhile

- I feel fully worthwhile. This boosts my moral and this I think makes parents happier at home.
- We don’t just need money; they are showing an interest. This boosts our self-esteem, but some citizens could not care less.
- City gives money but zero interest – they don’t come here.
- We feel worthwhile.
- They are being taken an interest in and this brings up their self-esteem.
- Rotary brought themselves and have been visible and part of the community themselves.

Supported outsiders and Rotarians in seeing our capacity

- Rotary has exposed people (outside) to this community and by bringing them they see our ability and commitment. This strengthens us.

- The partnership is a learning experience for both sides. They (rotary and outside) learn what's here and about us.

Taught us how to move through systems

- Taught us how to contact resources and we get to the route of the problem and how to get through the system.

Second Main Theme:

- children have an increased confidence and ability to do well in school.

Sub Themes:

- Our children are more confident
- Confidence I now see in the kids
- Kids benefit from patience and maturity of Rotarians.
- Kids get assistance, gain confidence

Our children do better at school

- Rotarians come to school and read with grade ones, parents have noticed a difference in children's reading.
- Rotary helps set up a homework club and there is positive feed back from parents. Many of us parents are not always available after school to help kids with homework due to working hours.
- Reading with grade 1st grade has improved since the interactions with Rotary

Children are less restless

- If the Rotary was not here our kids would be restless, more difficult to control...they would be on the street

Third Main Theme:

- in the neighbourhood there is an increased sense of community.

Data to support this theme:

- Rotary activities bring a lot of people together that do not usually see each other
- Rotary has brought neighbours together and strengthen them
- You make new friends
- Rotary events bring the community together
- there was more communication...the whole community participates, it brought people/ community together

What changes have been put in place as a result of the Rotary involvement?

Main Theme:

- development and expansion of programs.

Sub Themes:

Built up current and created new programs

- Rotary involvement has expanded current capacity of programs. So we can look after more kids in programs like the day camp.
- North end has grown more with their interest. The people have always been interested, but we needed the resources and the Rotary helped
- We beautified the Park.... New park across from Robert Land School well used.
- We now have Jazz feast
- Literacy program a huge success. Keep doing this. 1-1 kids enjoy it and look up to Rotarians
- With out Rotarians, not enough volunteers for reading programs
- Jazz on Mars: cash bonuses come back to the school. Money raised for school.

Increase money available to community

- they help with fundraising

What would you like to see happen in the Keith community?

Main Theme:

- continue to develop programs by mobilising financial and supportive resources.

Sub Themes:

Financial resources

- Want more resources in the community like the Broffman grant

Recreational resources

- Splash pad, more lighting in the park... finish the park. We want the park safe... We need more lights. The police won't go there.
- More art/music, singing lessons, something to encourage them "use hands for art not stealing" There is a lot of talent in the community.... Moms can't afford music instruments. We need something to bring out the best talent and help kids do something better with their time
- Sewing classes leading towards fashion design, ability to sew own clothes. Kids want to learn, but there is no place to learn.
- Cooking classes some mom's don't know how to cook.
- Recreational centre: if child is less than 11 years old it's harder for the parents to let them go outside of community. There is an invisible barrier (North of Barton & South of Barton) and the kids enforce this because they know where each kid "belongs"; "it's always been like this".

Support resources

- Help with financial planning, income tax, wills, etc.
- Help parents to deal with blended families
- Good babysitting services (more moms are working now)
- By being here they release stress from parents

MD resources

- MD only accepts clients in this office.
- My doctor was at First Place then she moved to Ancastor and it's hard to get there.
- Mom's have hard time find MD because they are not accepting new patients. Many don't have a regular doctor therefore they get bounced around. In an emergency they go to another MD.

Accessible Paediatrician

- Could use paediatric services locally since it's difficult and expensive to get to McMaster
- Need paediatric Dr. on call in the area...Need to get a Paediatric Dr. for kids in this area.
- No paediatrician on call at St. Joseph's. Have to wait to get Paediatric doctor.
- "No MD on call for Paediatrics"
- "Saw intern on call" – its not good, we need MP for Paediatrics.
- Put a Paediatrics 24 hours on call in a Doctor's office close to this area

Affordable medications

- Medications are expensive; perhaps a local Dr. could help by providing samples.
- Kids need medicine – parents can't offer it.
- If labs, etc were close by could save some time and money.
- My kids Miss ½ day school – It is a pain have to go further – My kid need blood work, and it couldn't be done in this area because we do not have a doctor in this area.

Transportation to medical appointments

- Children 's hospital at MAC. A lot of people can't make it to get there cost about \$19.00 taxi, parking expensive to bus 5 kids and sick kids to "MAC".
- I have to go to Queenston and Nash, takes 1 hour one way – 3 buses to get there. If I take a cab I have to take all my kids out of school. It's faster and easier to take a cab (\$11 to \$19 dollars). If you go by bus with all my kids I pay \$12 and it takes 1.5 hours.

Housing resources

- More ownership of homes; less rental and less deterioration (absentee landlords)

Accessible bus tickets

- Bus tickets save money but currently not sold in community.
- There is no place around here to get bus tickets – no post office – stamps – it's a pain to go downtown

Teen Programs

- Maybe a teen drop-in, use the church and Rotary could partner with them.

- Talk to teens about what they want. The girls just come and watch the boys play basketball. It's okay maybe there could be more.
- The teens need a space.
- Talk to teens about mentoring the youth in the Robert Land School.

Seniors programs

- Seniors afraid to go out. Need young married people or Rotary to pick them up. They need to be escorted out of the house. They would be less afraid.
- Get them a bingo night, it may take 6 months to get it going.

Adult centre

- We need something for me and my husband, adults...like a place to get rid of husband for a while

Increase number of police walking the beat

- Police officers try to break down barriers/boundaries but we need more police officers to walk around the neighbourhood so we know they are here.

Put in a neighbourhood Tim Horton's

- It would be good to have a Tim Horton's close by.

How do you see the Rotarians being involved in the Keith community in the future?

First Main Theme:

- **mobilise and advocate for community resources**

Data to support this theme:

- Maybe Rotary can help do something about helping us get a paediatrician. Maybe they know someone somewhere.
- More awareness of school and community needs
- We need an advocate to cut through red tape
- Need someone to get you to places
- Need help with resources, follow-up within the community
- There is help out there we need to find it. They don't listen to me because I'm just a Mom
- We need an advocacy centre because "if parents don't receive help neither will the kids" in the long run... Need help building that solid family base
- Advocacy centre is needed.

Second Main Theme:

- continue to support and build up neighbourhood involvement

Sub Themes:

More community involvement

- I would like more people involved in the night out.

More resources to support community involvement

- When you want to be involved there is transportation; child care costs that prevent them from going to get involved. It would be great if people could help with this.
- The yearly Christmas party; parents would like to attend but need more room.

First New Theme:

- "The mom's group and homework club are supports in the community which increase networking, ease the family burden and support children in their school work"

(While it could be argued that these findings answer the second focus group question, these activities more reflect the main efforts of people other than the Rotarians themselves and were therefore separated out.

The below sub themes support this finding:

Sub Themes:

The mom's group is a place of networking and generating resources

- The mom's group is about networking. Mom's group got friends through friends. We use networking with each other and some have found a day job. We pass on information by asking other Mom's. We use referrals...asking around for jobs
- The school does not advertise jobs e.g. babysitting. If someone needs a babysitter, moms will ask around and get back to him or her. We are discreet.
- Mom meets other mom's through Mom's group.
- Introduce Moms and Mom's to YWCA.
- We have a maximum of about nine in the Mom's group but it varies...depending on whose busy, has a Dr.'s appointment or Mom's kid's are sick. Mom's help each other e.g. income tax

The homework club helps kids do better in school and eases family burden

- The homework club makes life easier. No more 3 hours fighting
- I tried with my kids to do homework. When they didn't do it, all privileges revoked. With the Rotary they want do to homework.
- Before Rotary and the help they do with reading "I was at my wits end". Tired fighting 3-4 weeks...I Work 2-10 am? Work afternoon therefore can't help kids. Dad not good in school
- I can do homework at 6 a.m. but that is hard for my daughter. Baby sitter can't helps too many kids
- Spelling tests, improved 3/8 to 8/8
- They have extra time
- My husband is not good at school

- I have difficulty helping my kids read. “I’d rather have a root- canal” than read with my kid. So my kid goes to a homework club with the Rotary and after 2 months my kid will do homework on his own.

Second New Theme:

- funders need to realise it takes a community a while to integrate new programs.

Data to support this is as below:

- People need to realise that it takes awhile for programs to be built up. Funders think okay we will give money and in a few months if it does not look like it’s being used they take the money back. They need to realise it takes time.

ROTARIANS: FOCUS GROUP THEMES

What was most important to you about having the Rotarians be a part of the Keith community?

First Main Theme:

- doing work that is about creating sustainability change

Sub Themes:

Working from community identified needs

- Listening to what the community wants is what makes sustainable
- We learn about gaps, but it is a community effort. The gaps were identified by the community and we work with community resources to help fill in the gaps.

Supporting the development of community capacity

- Leaders in community is what will allow this to carry on
- Rotarians have helped in developing leadership and there is an increase in the confidence level. We can role model and people learn and is a benefit to them.
- Rotarians role model leadership to the process
- Our work is to build on current capacity
- Rotarians came and built on what was already there

Moving resources into the neighbourhood/school

- Opening resources in the community
- Opening doors through grant writing

Rotarians moved from charity model to hands on work

- Change in thinking from charitable model to actual work in community
- Hands on rather than cheque writing
- There was a history to be cheque writers

Second Main Theme:

- Rotarians have generated new relationships/ partnerships that make the community feel valued.

Sub Themes:

The community feels they can trust us

- They feel they can trust Rotary
- We have been accepted (as suits) in this community

The community feels important

- They appreciate that someone outside of the community care about what happens. real people are involved not an institution

- Some Rotarian women took girls shopping

The community does not feel alone

- They feel not alone.
- Rotarians have become a part of Keith community
- We have become a part of Keith community
- The agenda of people living in Keith Community is to try to get by day to day. They (may not) have energy to make it happen due to circumstances and we can help...we are there.
- Community can do their part when we are behind them, we can help give them confidence.
- We have direct ongoing relationships as opposed to just special occasions
- Some were very close with the kids

The community feels respected

- There is no talk-down based on social rank

Third Main Theme:

- making a difference in the lives of children.

Data to support this theme is:

- I love being with the kids. My wife was given the two most “incorrigible” kids in the school. She started out at with level B & C books this year. Now the kids are at level K & T. The teacher said it was because of her work. It is very satisfying.
- I love seeing the cards etc that come in and pictures of the kids. The work is very rewarding.

Fourth Main Theme:

- the community has accessible community based support.

Data to support this theme:

- Unless people (Rotary members and community workers) move into the Keith community, nothing will change
- We as workers are mostly facility bound. We need go to community. This is a learning experience. We have to be out there, do work in a different way in we are going to make a difference.
- We as workers are mostly facility bound. We need go to community. This is a learning experience. We have to be out there, do work in a different way is where we are going to make a difference.
- This will be successful because we will go to community/school instead of them coming to school to us.

Fifth Main Theme:

- the support of the principal Is vital

Data to support this theme:

- Important who staff and principal is...two principals were very involved and supportive.
- The principal is leaving at end of this year and he is critical to the success of the work
- Need a principal who take risks as opposed to control and dominate

What changes have occurred as a result of the Rotary involvement in the Keith community?

Main Theme:

- increased resources, increased community involvement and an increased awareness of community identified needs through being listened to

Sub Themes:

Increased resources

- YMCA are involved with outside funding...there are new resources coming in for existing community members programs which means there is funding/staffing.
- The Board of education, removal of social work we don't know what the impact would have been if we didn't have other resources

Increased community involvement in developing community identified projects

- There was a need for a nutrition plan, then the mom's group formed , then they wanted to work on a green space. The community was involved in determining needs and plans and who can do the work. Community member brought dump truck on their own time to clean away tarmac for park.
- At Jazz on Mars the neighbourhood helps.
- Thinking of next generation perked up the community – drew people in emotionally
- We help provided a Christmas party for kids that the kids asked for. Everyone helps.

Rotarian involvement raises the profile of the community and increases the awareness of community issues and community members are listened to

- Rotary involvement increases the profile of the community and they are listened to.
- needs of the community have become more quickly recognised as a result of the Rotary involvement
- voices in the community were listened to as a result of Rotary works
- Community leaders were listened too
- By having events such as the Jazz Mars, a Christmas breakfast, it celebrates the community. This is a bigger focus that turns into an event which is good for community/ schools sense of pride. These events increase the political interest in this community.
- As a result of Rotarian involvement there is more political attention and the community is listened to.
- If something happens in that school as a result of our involvement it helps the politicians get involved. It gets attention.

- The Rotarians have profile, people are there, so the politicians are there.

What would you like to see happen in the Keith Community?

Main Theme:

- a need for a local community advocate other than the Rotarians

Data to support this theme is below:

- We need someone who does this as a “job” so they move forward in a fast way. We need dedicated time, and commitment
- ...the work that gets done is on the side for us
- For many of us this work is an “add on”

How do you see the Rotarians being involved in the Keith community in the future?

Main Theme:

- continue to build and expand the capacity of the community by supporting the development of powerful community partnerships.

Sub Themes:

Create more partners and share leadership with all

- Rotary needs to allow the involvement of small business and possibly give leadership – too much ownership for Rotary
- Need to increase the involvement of small business
- Partnership with granting foundation – someone to help organise
- Different people different ideas
- Need to give the better jobs to the moms i.e. Reading instead of lice checks.

Expand on focus from school to community

- Need to build the capacity of the community – all of the community not just the school
- Need to change the name of the committee from the Inner City Schools Committee to include the community
- Need to incorporate more community involvement.
- Priority has been the kids. We need to also look at the connection between helping parents/families and supporting them to help their children. People can’t understand that assisting parents helps kids

Continue to mobilise resources

- I’m keen on using the resources available from funding from the Bronfman Foundation that we applied for.

First New Theme

- **there needs to be more Rotary club members support for this project**

Sub Themes:

Need more club member support for this approach

- This approach of being hands on and community driven is different from cheque writing and may not be widely recognized or accepted by other Rotaries
- Change in thinking from charitable model to actual work in the community
- Frustrating because if more were doing it, we could do more
- Do-gooders don't listen, they think they have the answers
- Major Projects Group in the Rotarians wanted something specific, something clearly defined to "cut a cheque" for. This was our traditional role and not what this is.

Time to do the hands on work

- Larger corporate people will not be accepted because they would not have time for community work
- a long process – "some Rotarians still don't understand what we are doing".
- One-day events – people like that....Some are wanting to help with Christmas breakfast and Jazz on Mars.
- A weekly time commitment is too much for some.
- I can't volunteer or go to the school. I can't do it because I work, my daughter is there, I have recruited people.
- People say they don't have time
- You have to give more of yourself – developing relationships
- People to do hands on work at school is an ongoing problem.

Challenge for club members in seeing the product as a process not an outcome

- Destination doesn't need to be known it is part of process

Approach is new and lacks credibility in club members eyes

- Took some selling to General membership to come to Robert Land
- Now have doctor involved – this brings a man with standing into the community that may pull others
- Started to invite other people to the table who better understand community development and can support the community in doing this work in a new way – different for Rotarians to do things this way (Sharon Charters, Karen Moncrieff)
- We had to look to guest speaker to talk about these concepts at large Rotary meetings

Members are afraid to go into low income areas

- There is a large involvement of people who grew up here
- School is not in the most desirable place (area)

Members feel they do not have the skill

- People don't feel like they have the skills

- many Rotarians were shy and didn't participate

Second New Theme:

- Create a strategic vision that is broader than just children and includes parents and community

Data to support this theme:

- there is a too narrow strategic direction for the Rotary Club for the Inner City Committee to continue to meet the needs of the community.
- Rotary Club currently has had a strategic plan and the direction has been disadvantaged children
- We need to look at Keith Neighbourhood as a priority
- We need to look at strategic priorities of the club (currently only children)
- people cant understand that assisting parents helps kids
- priority has been the kids need to look at the connection between parents/families

Third New theme:

- Lack of continuity in board membership

Data to support this theme:

- We have board members for 2 years. Then a new person comes in and gets lots of education and then in 18 months they leave.
- We do keep track and keep people informed but having to keep updating and getting people on board has a cost to the community.
- It's frustrating have to go back over and be questioned on things which are old, we have a vision but people can't share the vision.