Partners in Nutrition Thanks its Volunteers

The 5th annual Partners in Nutrition Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon was held at Michelangelo’s Banquet Centre on Tuesday, April 22nd. More than 200 volunteers who help with snack, breakfast, and lunch programs at local schools enjoyed a buffet lunch, presentations and door prize draws.

Among the presenters was Sarah Megens of the Hamilton Eat Local Farm to School Program and The Dashing Divas, a local group involved in a walk/run fundraiser to support all student nutrition programs in Hamilton.

The SPRC is the lead agency supporting student nutrition programs in Hamilton. The SPRC brings community partners together to advise on the development of the program and to help create a broad-based sustainable nutrition program for children in this community.

As the lead agency in Hamilton PIN, the SPRC provides the administrative and development support that allows PIN to garner support from government and businesses, ensuring healthy snacks and meals for over a hundred programs.

The SPRC’s Annual General Meeting was held on June 18th, 2008 at the Hamilton Public Library. This was a joint AGM with Community Information Hamilton and Volunteer Hamilton. The Hamilton Executive Director Aboriginal Coalition (HEDAC) and Darrel Skidmore, CEO of the United Way of Burlington and Greater Hamilton, addressed the meeting.

The SPRC thanked the many volunteers, Board members, staff and funders for their continuing support of our work through the year.

We welcome five new Board members: Robert Alexander, Director of Support Services at The Aids Network; Tim Cook, Chartered Accountant at BDO Dunwoody; Carmen Salciccioli, Director of The Good Shepherd Centre; Dominic Spadafora, semi-retired but working as a part-time consultant; and Debbie Wilkie, Hamilton Police Officer. All of these individuals are great community members and will bring new strengths and skills to the SPRC Board of Directors 2008-2009.

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Editor: Deirdre Dixon

With Thanks to all Contributors

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SPRC Board Bids Farewell to Five Members

We Asked Each Departing Board Member About the SPRC’s Recent Accomplishments -- Here are Some of Their Thoughts:

Carolann Fernandes

Between 2002 and 2008, I attended about 55 Board meetings, 48 Issues Management meetings, as well as other meetings and Board delegations. Many good things happened over these six years, and I found that the SPRC Board experience was a very affirming one!

In my first two years on the Board, I remember being involved with the Addressing the Needs of Street Involved Youth project. I felt humbled to see the complete report. The issue of street involvement is for me such a social tragedy that I was very glad to assist in bringing this project to fruition, even if indirectly.

The major priority for the Board over the last number of years has been poverty. The SPRC has worked hard to articulate to the general public the impact of impoverishment on seniors, women, children, immigrant populations and the LGBTQ community among others. The leadership of Don Jaffray and the commitment and professionalism of SPRC staff was very inspiring.

In closing, my experience on the Board has often caused me to think of Mother Teresa, who described Calcutta as a “City of Joy” because it provided the people of the world an opportunity to respond to its poor. I wonder if, in a similar vein, the poverty of Hamilton may be the catalyst that leads to its transformation?

Warren Korol

I found the report “Addressing the Needs of Street-Involved and Homeless Youth” to be extremely informative. The information provided in the report deals directly with the issues and needs of street youth. There is a need to invest time and resources in assisting these youth so that they can develop a sense of self-worth and become productive members of the community. There is much work to be done in this field.

The SPRC has done a terrific job in bringing the issues of those who are marginalized, in various ways, to the attention of the community. However, many of the answers to these concerns must be dealt with through the concerted effort of all three levels of government. Hamilton’s issues need to be supported by the Provincial and Federal Government through our MPs and MPPs. We need a stronger voice to truly bring these matters to the forefront.

Jeff Neven

I deeply appreciate the SPRC for its role in making social policy accessible to the people of Hamilton and for giving a voice to those who otherwise might not be heard. The SPRC has played a critical role in mobilizing citizens and their collective resources to increase community capacity. The SPRC has also provided significant leadership in bringing together agencies and key community leaders to promote policy change.

As a citizen of downtown Hamilton, I am filled with hope and inspiration when I see communities coming together, taking stock of their resources and challenges, and developing new strategies to bring about positive change. It is in this arena that I most often see the SPRC working and making a difference.

Jay Sengupta was unable to provide us with a comment. We at the SPRC want to thank her for her commitment to the Board and her dedication to community development.

Catherine Drea

As a Board member, I found the Addressing the Needs of Street Involved Youth report and the Couch Project amongst the most informative work the SPRC undertook. I am particularly interested in the links between community colleges and pathways for homeless and street involved youth. As a result of the Couch Project, Mohawk College was able to work with the initiative and it is hoped that, over time, the college will be able to offer programs and services to meet the needs of these individuals.

I believe that the principal challenges this organization and the community still face include poverty, the loss of jobs in the manufacturing sector, a lack of affordable housing, and the underemployment of newcomers.

SUMMERFEST CELEBRATES RIVERDALE -- AND THE SUCCESS OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

About 800 Riverdale community residents partied at Summerfest on August 20 at the Dominic Agostino Riverdale Community Centre. Organizers were delighted by the beautiful weather and large turnout. Every year, Community Action Plan for Children joins with the Hamilton Police Service, CATCH, Lightway Church and community members to create this neighbourhood event. Summerfest is important to Riverdale as many of the residents are new Canadians who want to experience Canadian traditions and community spirit.

This year, local singer/songwriter M.J. Dann brought some live entertainment to the festivities. M.J. lives in the Riverdale community and many people were pleased to hear her singing and playing her guitar. There were hot dogs, samosas, spring rolls, water, candy floss and popcorn given out to everyone who attended. Stoney Creek Dairy distributed free ice cream. Summerfest also provides a venue for community tables that inform residents about the local services that are available to them.

Community groups and service providers bring information and resources to the Riverdale community.

Games bring kids together at Summerfest.

Community member and singer M.J. Dann.
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AGM 2008: 
Three United Way Agencies Share One Stage

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The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton is a United Way funded agency.

Outgoing Board President, Mary Meyer, summarizes the SPRC’s achievements over the past year.

PARTNERS IN NUTRITION THANKS ITS VOLUNTEERS

PIN’s Rapidly Growing Programs Bring Together Donors, Volunteers and Partners From Across the City, Making Sure Schoolkids Have Nutritious Food

Mayor Fred Eisenberger congratulates the volunteers on their hard work.

Volunteers look at the doorprizes donated by local businesses. The SPRC helps new community development initiatives to build the connections they need to sustain themselves.

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