

STAR Action Plan – March 2013 Tenant Consultation Summary Report

From June to December 2012, STAR the Social Planning and Research Council consulted with tenants in the neighbourhoods served by STAR, in partnership with Banyan Community Services to ask...

The Question: *What do tenants in STAR's catchment areas want and need from STAR?*

To answer this question, we talked to...

- 77 residents through surveys (36 from Oriole Crescent and the surrounding area, 30 from Congress Crescent, and 11 from Kenora Avenue)
- 13 residents through interviews
- 4 community partners involved with STAR in some way through interviews

Recommendations, based on what we heard, fit into these four themes:

1. Improve Awareness
2. Coordinate with Other Community Partners
3. Improve Service
4. Increase Capacity

These recommendations were prioritized into short, medium, and long-term actions as part of a recommended **Action Plan**.

Short Term:

- Advertise more. Consider coordinating with other service providers to make advertising more cost effective and beneficial to community members.
- Make pick-up and drop off policy clear. Try to make the policy more accessible by informing parents that they can designate other adults or siblings as approved escorts and providing forms to do so.
- CHH employs community relations workers who may be able to visit residents shortly after their tenancy begins and share information about the STAR program if tenants have children in the ages that STAR serves or younger (since these children will eventually reach the age of eligibility).
- Coordinate with other services in area about scheduling to maximize community benefit. Consider moving days to complement other services.

- Collaborate with local OEYCs and advertise any service schedule coordination to parents in order to increase participation from families with children who are not all eligible for STAR because of age.
- Consider more flexible ratios, depending on ages, needs, etc.

Medium Term:

- Offer more organized activities
- Offer more physical and educational activities
- Begin the program closer to dismissal time at area schools (such as at 3:30p.m.)
- Make transportation easier for lone parents, possibly through use of approved volunteers to walk children to and from the program, or by supporting parents in designating another adult or sibling to escort their children to and from STAR
- Explore opportunities for staff capacity building around working with children with disabilities
- Prioritize hiring staff who have French or other language capacity in addition to English
- Offer more continuous service between summers and school year
- Explore staffing models that include a mix of more and less experienced staff, leaders in training, and/or volunteers
- Explore the possibility of operating both STAR and Wesley's reading buddies programs at Kenora out of one unit of housing on different days with Wesley Urban Ministries and City Housing Hamilton.

Long Term:

- Consider using volunteers to escort children to and from STAR if parents are unable to pick up/drop off (with parental designation/approval). For example, explore the possibility of having high school students earn their volunteer hours helping with the after school program, and then drawing from this pool for summer camp employees.
- Look for opportunities to expand capacity to serve more children with increased staff or trained volunteers. Having the STAR locations as a pick-up point and running programming at the East Kiwanis Community Centre, local schools, or other larger/institutional locations could be another way to increase capacity and include more physical activity programming.
- Offer service on as many days as resources allow, and consider including weekend days.

Thanks to all residents and community partners who spoke with us to help develop this action plan. The full report is available in English at: www.sprc.hamilton.on.ca/reports

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