

2010 /2011 IN REVIEW

Safer Places for Children and Youth Program

We are pleased to report that our Safer Places for Children and Youth Program has once again achieved excellent results and moved us closer to our vision of a Connected Community where People Care for one Another.

We created our Safer Places for Children and Youth program a few years ago when it became clear to us that we needed and wanted to do more to prevent the sexual abuse, sexual assault, and bullying of children and youth in our community. We know this is a significant problem on the North Shore. Statistics confirm that 30% of girls and 25% of boys will be a victim of one or more of these types of trauma in their early years. The multi-generational cost is staggering. Untreated children and adolescents are more likely to become perpetrators of these types of abuses, creating a cycle of abuse that impacts generations. The lifetime cost of treating long term mental health disorders (psychiatric care, medications, counselling), physical problems (alcoholism, eating disorders, obesity), and societal impacts (unemployment, disability claims, Ministry involvement) is exponentially eliminated when we prevent the trauma from occurring, or intervene close in time to when the traumatic event occurred.



Our Safer Places for Children and Youth Program is designed to do three things.

1. Prevent the sexual abuse, sexual assault, and/or bullying of children and adolescents through an innovative partnership with Safeteen International. Our counsellors attend the Safeteen school based workshops to let children and adolescents know that we are a place to go for help if they have been or are currently being abused.
2. Help children, adolescents, and their families recover and heal from the traumatic effects of these traumas if they have already occurred. Our specialized counsellors work with children age 3-19 to reduce the shame, guilt, anxiety and other symptoms that are caused by a traumatic event.
3. Create a social safety net of teachers, school counsellors, parents, and community members who can respond effectively when they receive a disclosure from a traumatized child or adolescent.



We would like to thank our Corporate Partners.



We have achieved many great results. Here are the highlights:

- Our partnership with Safeteen International touched over 1300 students and adults.
- Close to 1000 students received a “Do you have a story to tell” business card with both the number for our intake counsellor, and our texting number.
- We learned that youth prefer to communicate by text and we adapted our intake process to accept intakes by text from teens.
- Over 200 parents and teens joined Mayor Pamela Goldsmith Jones and Anita Roberts Founder of Safeteen International in a presentation on March 3rd at Kay Meek Centre: *Help Kids Make Wise Choices*.
- Our clinical counsellors helped 93 children and adolescents and their families recover and heal from the traumatic effects of abuse.
- We redesigned our website to ensure a dedicated Youth section related to issues impacting children and youth. And we ensured our strategy and direction for the website by testing the usability of our site with youth.
- Family Services implemented a pilot project Safeteen for Preteens at Ridgeview Elementary School with Safeteen for 14 teachers, 60 parents and 240 Grade 4 to 7 students.
- Safeteen for Preteens is all about prevention and protection. Preventing unhealthy choices, redefining what is “cool,” coping with peer pressure and protecting the fragile self-esteem of the young girls and boys who are just stepping into the potentially treacherous world of adolescence.

We have accomplished a lot and still have a lot more to do. Over the next year, we will expand the program in the following ways:

- Ridgeview Elementary School is now in the process of booking Family Services and Safeteen to return to their school to give the students a “booster” of the information.
- We are in the beginning stages of conversations to bring our Safeteen for Preteens program to other North Shore elementary schools.
- Our clinical counselling staff will continue to partner with Safeteen International’s Founder Anita Roberts and her “Agents for Change” facilitators to provide comprehensive education and support to elementary and high school students, parents, teachers, administrators and school counsellors.
- A formal launch of our youth website will take place once we have populated it with resources relevant to lives of youth in our community. This will include the promotion of texting capabilities as well as the information posted on our website.

We received the following feedback on the March 3rd event from the parents,

- Fabulous, learned so much. Touched my soul and gave me hope for my kids and those I work with.
- Outstanding program and fantastic partnership with Family Services.
- Thanks. Excellent skills I learned to teach my girls.

Thank you again for your generous support of the Safer Places for Children and Youth Program.