

filling

the

gaps

An assessment
of the needs of youth at risk
in Maple Ridge And Pitt Meadows
December, 2001

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executive summary

This report documents an assessment of potential gaps in services for youth at risk in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows (Ridge Meadows). The project was funded through the National Crime Prevention Centre, National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention: Safer Communities Initiative, Community Mobilization Program, in partnership with the Haney Central Policing Committee.

The Haney Central Community Policing Committee acted as the steering group for the project. To gain a broad perspective of those interested in issues for youth in the community the researcher attended committee meetings relevant to youth issues. This also provided a venue to give updates on the project, and gain input and direction. The researcher established a “virtual committee” by creating an email group (Youth Newsgroup) made up of those interested in the project—more than 60 individuals and groups. This group was kept apprised of project developments, and encouraged to participate in reviewing survey instruments, soliciting survey input, giving feedback on emerging issues, etc.

Contact was made with parents, youth and those providing services to youth in both communities. Initially, the researcher made personal contact with a group of key informants, including service providers, parents and youth, and on the basis of their feedback a questionnaire was developed and circulated in the community. The survey asked respondents if they believed that there were unmet needs for youth in the areas of alcohol and drug treatment, mental health, jobs, safe and affordable housing, after school care, and health services for youth in the two communities. 131 youth, 60 parents and 85 service providers responded to the survey. While the survey was made widely available through a community newspaper, the Maple Ridge Pitt Meadows Times, the response from the general population was low. The researcher concentrated on gaining input from youth at risk, their parents and those service providers working with them. Therefore, conclusive generalizations across the youth population of Ridge Meadows cannot be made. However, based on the number of respondents, and types of responses, it seems clear that there are both perceived and real gaps, and in many cases insufficient levels of service to meet the needs of a growing youth population.

Parents identified a high need for services relating to alcohol and drug treatment, safe housing, and family counseling, with the need for recreational opportunities and mental health services also high on the priority list. Youth identified a need for jobs and job related skills, alcohol and drug treatment, recreational opportunities and safe housing. Service providers identified safe housing, mental health services and family counseling as the highest priorities.

Following the survey phase, a community forum was held. More than 60 people participated in the forum, discussing the issues that were important to them, and beginning to form strategies for action to address the gaps in service that had been identified. The results of the forum form part of this report.

Throughout the project the researcher gathered information on programs and services and strategies used elsewhere to address the needs of youth at risk. These resources are listed in the appendices to this report, and as indicated in the appendix, some can be accessed on the Internet, and some at the Family Education and Support Centre in Maple Ridge

Many of the gaps in service shown through this study have been previously identified. It is hoped that this report will pool the existing information with the new, serve as a “snapshot in time” for future use, and be a catalyst for community action to expand services for youth in Ridge Meadows.

recommendations

The recommendations that follow are respectfully offered with the understanding that service providers in the community already have the knowledge and commitment to fill the gaps in services for youth, and that in most instances, the problem is a shortage of resources. These recommendations therefore, serve only as a “reminder” or documentation of what was heard from a community of very caring people, and to provide encouragement to those who have resources, but have yet to make a commitment. It is hoped that the recommendations will be taken into account by funders of social services in Ridge Meadows, and perhaps by local government, as they continue to plan for increased housing for young families in the area. Clearly, services have not kept pace with the increase in the population.

Alcohol and Drug

Alcohol and drug counseling and treatment was high on the priority list of parents, youth and service providers. The rate of use of alcohol and tobacco by teens has not changed much in this region since 1992, however the use of marijuana has increased province wide from 25% to 40%. Just over one quarter of children who reported using marijuana first tried it at the age of 12 or under, and prevention activities have so far not had much impact (McCreary Centre Society).

There is no local access to detox for youth. Alcohol and drug counseling is available to youth through Maple Ridge Alcohol and Drug and the Astra Program. Wait lists are not long and are managed in ways that ensure some immediate service to those in need. However, there appears to be some confusion around just what the services are, and how they can be accessed.

Alcohol and drug counseling was the highest priority for parents responding to the survey. However, a high percentage of the parents responding to the survey were parents whose children were already in difficulty, and one must ask the question “Are these youth ready and willing to be treated for addiction, or are we simply seeing a reflection of what their parents wish for them?”. Service providers clearly identified a need for secure detox services at the local level, but again, the number of youth ready and willing to engage in detox was not established.

Recommendations:

- 1.1 *Up-to-date information on alcohol and drug treatment services for youth is made available to parents, youth and those working with youth, including school teachers and counselors.*
- 1.2 *A method of tracking the numbers of youth who are unable to access alcohol and drug counseling and detox services is put into place.*
- 1.3 *Schools and alcohol and drug service providers work together to discover and deliver effective alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs for children under the age of 12.*
- 1.4 *Development of outcomes measurement systems for existing prevention and intervention programs.*
- 1.5 *Parent education about how to talk to children about substance misuse.*
- 1.6 *Community advocacy for youth detox and a DEWY (day, evening and weekend) program at the local level.*
- 1.7 *Stronger links between existing alcohol and drug services and programs geared towards youth at risk (e.g. Parents Together, Youth Justice, School District #42).*
- 1.8 *Implementation of the HIV/AIDS plan for Ridge Meadows by the Simon Fraser Health Region.*
- 1.9 *Recognition by program funding sources that transportation problems make it difficult or impossible for youth and families to access services outside the community.*

Safe Housing

Safe housing is a high priority for parents and service providers, particularly for 13-19 year old youth. Thirty-six youth indicated that they had been unable to access a safe place to stay at some point—27% of the youth surveyed. While the majority of youth surveyed indicated that they had stayed with friends, this strategy appeared to lead at best to the loss of friendships, and ongoing “couch surfing”, and at worst to youth staying in exploitive or risky situations.

The option of youth from the Ridge Meadows area going to safe houses in Vancouver is problematic, because of transportation issues, fear of leaving the community, and because for the most part, these facilities provide housing for down town street entrenched youth (some of whom may have originated in Ridge Meadows). While safe houses in the city do record numbers of youth from outside the city accessing their services, they do not collect data specific to Ridge Meadows. Workers at Vancouver safe houses estimated that the number of youth from Ridge Meadows served was quite low.

There are a variety of options for providing safe housing for youth in transition or crisis. Four models were explored:

The free standing safe house model common in larger jurisdictions does provide a place for youth in crisis to stay, but it is not without problems. Safe houses are expensive to run, have the potential to put youth, who might otherwise return home, together with longer term street entrenched youth. Further, Safe Houses often end up housing children in foster care, thereby doubling the cost to the system. Most Safe Houses have rules around housing youth who are under the influence of controlled substances. This could conceivably result in youth at very high risk being turned away.

Another model is demonstrated in the Dusk to Dawn program <http://members.home.net/dusktilldawn/> which provides a safe environment, access to resources and peer counseling between the hours of 7:30 pm and 8:00 am to street involved youth. While this model does not provide actual beds, it does provide a safe place for youth in crisis to go, as well as access to a network of resources, and support. This model appears to be efficient in that it does not require 24 hour staffing, utilizes volunteers and serves as a place for street youth to find safety and help. The model could conceivably be run in an existing facility in the community.

A third model investigated by the researcher is called Project Safe Place <http://www.iglou.com/safeplace/index.html>. Project Safe Place is an innovative program designed to assist youth and families in crisis situations. The program began in Louisville, Kentucky in 1983 as an outreach effort of the YMCA Center for Youth Alternatives, a short-term shelter for youth at risk. Its success has prompted the implementation of this program in over 500 communities throughout the United States. This program is a unique example of how communities can collaborate with the business sector, volunteers and youth service agencies to provide temporary safe havens for youth in crisis. Thousands of young people have received help at designated Safe Place locations across the US. Business and community buildings display a diamond-shaped yellow and black Safe Place logo identifying them as Safe Place sites - places in neighbourhoods where youth can get immediate help. Safe Place sites include fast food restaurants, convenience stores, movie theatres, and other community facilities such as fire departments, libraries, YMCA and Boys & Girls Clubs. In some cases buses are designated as mobile Safe Place sites. Volunteers respond to youth at Safe Place locations, and the program is thought to be an effective means of reaching youth in the early stages of crisis. This program does not provide emergency beds, but is connected to resources that do, where these exist.

A fourth model was explored by those attending a session on safe housing at the community forum. This model would provide training, resources and support to volunteer families who are willing to offer short (or even longer term) housing to youth in crisis, and would employ a case manager who would advocate for youth and access other services for them.

Reconnect workers interviewed subsequent to the Forum expressed some concerns around the safety

of this model: a) Youth who are in crisis and in need of a place to stay are often high on drugs, and might have overdosed. b) Families with minimal training might not recognize the signs, or know how to cope. c) Even if families are carefully screened, it would be impossible to screen extended family, friends, etc., and youth could potentially be unsafe. Host families would also be at risk of having property stolen. Reconnect workers felt that an environment supervised by professionals is critical for these youth, and suggested that even a designated hotel/motel room with a social worker or a group of community professionals donating time, would be better than nothing.

Recommendations:

- 2:1 *The Homelessness Committee, along with others in the community who are working with youth at risk, investigate options for providing emergency shelter to homeless youth, including those detailed above.*
- 2:2 *The creation of a plan for emergency shelter that includes timelines for implementation, a management structure, and possible sources of funding for a safe housing project, in the first part of 2002.*
- 2.3 *Those working with youth (MCFD, Reconnect, RCMP, school counsellors, Parents Together Youth Services, etc.) create systems for: ongoing data collection with respect to the actual numbers of homeless youth, strategies that are being employed in dealing with the issues for homeless youth, and the outcomes of these strategies.*
- 2.4 *The community advocates for more support and affordable housing for youth living independently.*
- 2.5 *The Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver is used in conjunction with community plans in the development and implementation of new housing services for youth.*

Recreational Opportunities

Clearly, there is a need for more after-school and evening recreational and cultural activities for children and youth, particularly the 10-12 year old age group and older youth at high risk.

The new Greg Moore Youth Centre, which opened during this assessment has been an overwhelming success with 200—300 youth attending the drop-in every evening. 25-30 youth attend the drop-in at the Pitt Meadows Youth Centre and between 200-300 youth attend programs at that centre monthly.

Youth Services staff have done an amazing job of pulling youth into programs over the past few years, however, they cannot and should not be expected to be “all things to all people”. Some of the more marginalized youth see the Youth Centre as being “uncool” and the sheer numbers of youth in Ridge Meadows, as well as transportation issues for those outside the downtown core make it impossible for two centres of activity to meet all the needs. Further, discussion at the two forum sessions on recreational services, demonstrated that Youth Services staff are already stretched and are challenged by the increase of youth accessing new facilities.

While subsidies for families in need are available for recreational and sports programs, it appears that there may be some barriers to families accessing subsidized programs. These could include fear of being stigmatized, lack of knowledge about subsidies, or a lack of awareness of the importance of recreational involvement for youth.

Recommendations:

- 3.1 *Community members working with youth continue to plan to address the issues identified at the community forum. In particular:*
- 3.2 *It is critical that the school district, Youth Services, church and community groups con-*

- tinue to work together to provide after school programming in neighbourhoods around the community (See resource article on page 54).*
- 3.3 *Youth Services, Arts Council and sports organizations work together to eliminate the financial and "elitist" barriers to participation in recreational and cultural programs by marginalized youth.*
 - 3.4 *Grass roots programming, such as the Fenstanton project be supported and encouraged to spread to other low income neighbourhoods.*
 - 3.5 *Youth services, churches, community groups, Community Policing and the school district continue to work with youth to find ways to respond to issues of violence and inter-school relationships.*
 - 3.6 *The community and local government continue to work to address transportation issues for youth in Ridge Meadows.*

Jobs and Job Training

Job training, job search skills and jobs were the highest priority for youth in the survey. While many of the youth interviewed were not yet old enough to work, they consistently identified this as an issue. For youth at risk, this seems to be one of the ways they envision having some control over their circumstances. This desire for employment by youth at risk can only serve as an opportunity for those who would reduce the numbers of unemployed youth and youth on social assistance.

The state of local, provincial, national and global economies, do not presently give much encouragement to those seeking work—particularly the unskilled youth entering the job market. However, with the expected upcoming skills shortage, as older workers retire, new opportunities will likely arise for educated workers. While there are job training and job preparation programs available (Job Zone, Career Links, Inner Choices, Access Employment, etc.) there appears to be a need for stronger links between existing programs, youth, parents, schools and the business community. These will not be created without community leadership and action.

Recommendations:

- 4.1 *Establishment of a task force that includes representatives from secondary schools, youth, Continuing Education, private educational institutions operating locally, CAPP, local business, and HRDC. The role of this task force would be to develop an integrated approach to job related issues for youth in Ridge Meadows, including taking advantage of provincial and federal government programs.*
- 4.2 *Economic development initiatives continue to work towards providing local employment opportunities for youth.*
- 4.3 *School District #42 continues to develop and implement strategies to encourage youth to complete Grade 12, including the reduction of school suspensions and the support of alternate schooling programs.*

Family Counseling

Numerous studies have shown that youth with a strong sense of connection to family and high levels of connectedness to school are associated with better physical and emotional health. The lack of funding for affordable family counseling has continued to elude efforts by families and community agencies who would provide this service. Affordable family counseling was identified as a top priority by the Child and Youth Committee (CYC) at least five years ago. When the CYC was disbanded and subsequently replaced by the Child Youth and Family Network Committee (CYFN), the need for free or affordable family counseling as a preventative measure was again raised, as Ridge Meadows continued to be the only community in the region that did not provide this service.

At the community forum, participants developed a plan to address this gap, with the intention that the

plan will be further developed and implemented by a sub committee of the CYFN.

Recommendations:

- 5.1 *The CYFN make this issue a priority in 2002.*
- 5.2 *The community send a clear message to the Ministry for Children and Families that addressing this gap in services is a high priority in the Ridge Meadows, and that the provision of affordable family counseling, prior to family breakdown, will likely result in long term savings to the system.*

Mental Health

For the purpose of this report, psychiatric assessment and treatment will be included in this section.

The realignment of mental health services which has passed responsibility from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry for Children and Family Development does not appear to have significantly increased mental health services for youth. Physicians responding to the survey phase of the project consistently identified the need for psychiatric assessment and treatment service at the local level. Only those with the highest needs receive services and youth with "less severe" mental health disorders are not being served at the local level.

Recommendations:

- 6.1 *The CYFN advocate for implementation of the recommendations contained in Simon Fraser Region Mental Health Services Community Needs Assessment, with respect to youth services.*
- 6.2 *Those working with youth and parents continue to advocate for services for youth with mental health disorders who are not currently being served, and for program staffing that will allow for prevention activities.*
- 6.3 *Those working with youth and the community continue to advocate for adequate community based psychiatric assessment and treatment services for youth.*

Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation has been shown to result from issues of substance abuse, safe housing, parental abuse and family violence and breakdown. While the issue of sexual exploitation of youth was not identified as a top priority in the survey phase of the project, it does appear to be a significant issue in the community and concern about this issue was expressed by parents, service providers and youth. Vancouver police DISC (Deter, Identify Sex Trade Consumers) detectives indicate that pimps recruit heavily in this area because suburban youth are deemed to be more naive and/or easier to manipulate into the sex trade.

Recommendation:

- 7.1 *The community committee on sexual exploitation meets on a regular basis to further develop and implement the plan developed at the community forum and access the resources required to do so.*

Networking/Communication

Although there are a number of active committees working on youth issues in the community, services are thinly spread, and at times many service providers are just too busy to attend meetings, or take on responsibilities outside of their front-line or administrative work. The researcher found that the use of

technology increased both her ability to send information to service providers, as well as the ability to gather information from them. In a three month period, the researcher recorded 184 messages to or from service providers. The email group created for the purpose of this assessment could provide an efficient ongoing way for service providers to network and problem solve. The Child Youth and Family Network has played a valuable role in identifying issues for youth, and has been a catalyst for a number of successful initiatives. However, the work of the committee is often carried out by a small number of over-worked advocates and would be enhanced by full participation of those working with youth and families.

Recommendations:

- 8.1 *Agencies working with youth and parents of youth at risk continue to improve networks and their ability to be responsive to emerging issues through the Child Youth and Family Network, and the use of the Youth News Group email list. Copies of the Youth News Group (Outlook Express) can be requested from the researcher (carol.munro@royalroads.ca)*
- 8.2 *The CYFN continues to provide a united voice for those working with children, youth and families. The work of the committee could become more focused by the creation of a list of priorities and an annual work plan.*
- 8.3 *The CYFN plan for an annual networking and problem solving event, such as the forum that took place in the course of this study.*
- 8.4 *The community provides a continuum of services geared towards prevention and education, as well as intervention programs for youth and builds on successful models that use aspects of mentoring and peer support. Services should include:*
 - *Prenatal and parenting education*
 - *Programs geared towards early childhood brain development*
 - *Education and support for pregnant and parenting teens*
 - *Early parent and youth education on issues of substance misuse, mental and physical health and sexual exploitation*
 - *Recreational and cultural opportunities for youth of all ages, in all parts of the community*
 - *Counseling and support for families at risk*
 - *A continuum of intervention services for youth at risk.*

"Everything participates in the creation and evolution of its neighbours. There are no unaffected outsiders. No one system dictates conditions to another. All participate together in creating the conditions of their interdependence."

"When human beings link together, they form systems that create more possibilities, more freedom for individuals."

Margaret Wheatley
A Simpler Way, 1996

project background

The Haney Central Community Policing Committee

The Haney Central Community Policing Committee is one of four such committees in Ridge Meadows. It is made up of a group of people representing a diverse cross section of the community, and provides a vehicle for individuals and organizations to express their concerns about public safety.

The objectives of the Committee are to:

- Involve people in proactive, problem oriented policing strategies
- Assist in identifying and analyzing community safety issues, through public consultation.

The Haney Central Community Policing Committee is part of a network of committees and agencies working with youth in Ridge Meadows. Through the network as well as its own experience, the Committee became aware of a number of concerns related to the growing number of youth in the area. These included:

- A lack of temporary housing for youth in crisis
- A lack of support for youth with addiction to alcohol and drugs – particularly at the treatment level
- A lack of recreational facilities
- Teen pregnancy
- Hunger
- The number of suspensions from school.

Accordingly, the Committee applied to the Community Mobilization for funding to conduct a needs assessment for youth in Ridge Meadows.

The Community Mobilization Program

The Community Mobilization Program is an initiative of the National Crime Prevention Centre, National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention: Safer Communities Initiative.

The goals of the program are to:

- Increase the development of broad, community-based partnerships that can deal with local crime prevention issues
- Increase public awareness of and support for crime prevention
- Increase the capacity of diverse communities to deal with crime and victimization.

In April of 2001, funding to conduct a community needs assessment to identify gaps in services for youth in Ridge Meadows was granted to the Haney Central Community Policing Committee through the Community Mobilization Program. The Committee subsequently contracted with Munro & Associates Consulting to conduct the assessment.

Why Look At The Needs Of Youth In Ridge Meadows?

Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows are rapidly growing adjacent municipalities with a high youth population that is expected to reach 30% of the overall population by the year 2006:

The 1996 Statistics Canada data showed that the current percentage of residents between the ages of five and fourteen is 16.2% in Maple Ridge and 16.8% in Pitt Meadows, compared to the BC average of 6.9%.

AGE	1996	2001	2006
0-4	4,844	5,475	6,036
5-9	4,756	5,377	5,927
10-14	4,043	4,570	4,058
15-18	3,498	3,954	4,399
Total >20	17,141	19,377	21,360
Increase	2,366	2,236	1,983
Pop >14	13,643	15,423	17,001
Increase	1,883	1,780	1,579
Total Pop	56,173	63,500	70,000

Source: Statistics Canada (1996)

Ridge Meadows has already passed the projections to 2006; jointly, the districts have an approximate population of 78,000, and it is expected that this will grow to 119,000 by 2026.

At this time there are 6,236 children between the ages of 10-14 yrs, and 3,398 between the ages of 15-18 registered in School District #42.

It is estimated that over the next 10 year period, we can expect that:

- *One person in four in Ridge Meadows will be under the age of 14*

- *One person in three will be below the age of 20, and that the community will include approximately 17,000 youth below the age of 20.*

Some other statistics relevant to this study:

- 6.4% of children in Ridge Meadows receive social assistance, compared to 5.10% and 5.2% respectively in the neighbouring districts of Langley and Coquitlam.
- 16% of youth aged 12-18 smoke, only 1% below the provincial average.
- Student literacy rates: In grade 4, 20% of children are not meeting expectations (better than provincial rate of 25%). In grade 7, 22% are not meeting expectations (provincial rate of 25%). In grade 10, 31% are not meeting expectations (provincial rate of 25%)
- Teen pregnancy rates appear to be on the rise. 87 teen pregnancies were recorded in 1997/98, and 97 in 1998/99. In 1997/98, live births to teen mothers averaged 11.8 per 1,000 (29 births). In 1998/99 the rate increased to 17.2 (44 births).

Trends identified in a 1991 Maple Ridge study by Yates & Associates Consulting Services indicate that :

- Lower housing costs are attracting young families
- There is an increase in the number of two parent families where both parents working outside the home
- A high number of citizens commute outside of the community to work
- There is an increasing number of one parent families
- There is increasing evidence of low income families
- There is an increasing incidence of poverty in the community.

The Project Goal

To identify and plan for the needs of youth at risk in the area serviced by School District 42 and the Ridge Meadows RCMP (Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows).

The Project Objectives

- To provide an opportunity for youth, parents, service providers and concerned citizens to identify gaps in services for youth at risk in Ridge Meadows
- To increase public awareness of the needs of youth in the community
- To create a network of individuals and agencies concerned with youth issues
- To create strategies to address the needs identified in the study.

The Project Model

The project used a participatory action research approach. Information gathered was specific to the individuals involved. There were no random samples of research subjects, no "double-blind" studies, no rigorous study conditions, and comparisons were not made with other jurisdictions. Therefore conclusive generalizations across populations are not possible.

A recent study by the McCreary Centre Society, "Listening to BC Youth: Simon Fraser/Burnaby Region" presented results of the Adolescent Health Survey II. This study examined the health status and risk behaviour of youth around the province, and results indicate that most young people are healthy, get along with their families, enjoy school and look forward to the future.

With this in mind, and because the concerns of the Haney Policing Committee in conducting the needs assessment had to do with youth at risk, the research focused on the needs of youth at risk in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows. Detailed information related to the health and risks for the general population of youth in the area is available from the McCreary study.

Data from that study that is relevant will be quoted in this report.

The project was conducted in six phases:

1. Review of existing studies and reports on youth at risk
2. Meetings with those working with youth in the community to prepare a preliminary list of issues
3. Creation of a survey tool
4. Survey of youth, parents and service providers
5. A community Forum to review results of meetings and surveys, and begin to strategize around how to deal with the issues identified in the study
6. Final report and project evaluation.

Defining Youth at Risk

Children and youth generally considered to be at risk are those whose parent(s) or guardians have been unable to provide a nurturing environment which includes love, the expression of high expectations and belief in the child's ability, and acknowledgement of them as a valid participant in family, school and community life. Children and youth are also considered to be at risk if:

- They live in poverty
- They have been sexually and/or physically abused
- They are unable to access physical and mental health services when they need them
- Their parents indulge in substance misuse
- They have a low birth weight.

Any of these factors can have an impact on the physical, mental and social health and development of children.

"Most young people are healthy, get along with their families, enjoy school, and look forward to the future"

Listening to BC Youth, McCreary Centre Society

The researcher accessed and reviewed a range of studies of at youth at risk as well as recent reports related to youth in the province of BC. A list of these documents can be found in the appendix to this report. Many of them can be accessed at the Family Education and Support Centre Library or on the Internet.

The researcher then moved to reviewing existing reports, data and material related to youth in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows, and requested some of those working with youth at-risk in the community to collect data for a period of time during the study:

RCMP data on youth related incidents in Ridge Meadows

For the purpose of this study, RCMP officers tracked the number of youth related incidents in the month of September, 01. During that period, 644 files were opened relating to a wide variety of incidents. These involved everything from noisy gathering, setting fires, vandalism, runaways, etc., to more serious incidents involving theft, assault, alcohol and drugs, and violence.

Among these incidents were:

- 63 alcohol related issues
- 18 drug related issues
- 7 runaways
- 66 parenting issues, and
- 78 violence related issues.

RCMP data also showed that: in 2000, the highest number of charges laid against youth were for assault, theft under \$5,000 and breaking and entering:

- 44 assault charges were laid against youth in Maple Ridge and 9 in Pitt Meadows (36 males and 17 females)
- 19 breaking and entering charges were laid against youth in Maple Ridge (18 males and 1 female)
- 36 charges of theft under \$5,000 were laid in Maple Ridge and 3 in Pitt Meadows (27 males and 12 females)
- 33 alcohol or drug related charges were laid in Maple Ridge and 26 in Pitt Meadows (41 males and 13 females).

RCMP statistics for the year 2000 Chronic Runaway list showed that a significant number

of youth are reported as runaways:

<i>Total runaway files opened</i>	237
<i>Total of files with 2 or more entries:</i>	151
<i>Number of youth with 2 or more entries:</i>	43
<i>Total files with 4 or more entries:</i>	77
<i>Number youth with 4 or more entries:</i>	11

The number of youth on the chronic runaway list had risen since the previous year (1999) when 201 files were opened, but was lower than in 1998 (257 files opened) and 1997 (293 files opened).

Overall, RCMP estimate that 20-25% of their time is spent dealing with youth issues:

“Our sense is that youth are becoming more violent, and substance misuse is a very large concern because many crimes are committed under the influence, or to assist in obtaining drugs. We are also concerned about the increase in vandalism and the number of groups of unsupervised youth who are out late at night without supervision”

Cpl. Bernie Smandych, Community Policing

Youth Services - Youth Worker Daily Logs

The Youth Outreach Initiative Program, a part of Ridge Meadows Parks and Leisure Services was developed in 1994 to address the growing needs of youth in the Ridge Meadows area.

As well as offering recreational and volunteer opportunities for youth, workers provide guidance, primary intervention, pre-counselling information and appropriate referrals to youth, especially those in crisis.

A review of youth worker’s logs for the period

May, 1999—May, 2000 indicated that during that time, youth workers had been involved in assisting 32 youth between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, who were at high risk. Twenty one of these had no place to stay when youth workers became involved. Nine of these did not want to go home because of family violence, three were suicidal, four were being sexually exploited, and two were pregnant.

Focus group conducted by Mountain View Salvation Army

This focus group conducted on June 15, 01, included 17 youth:

Participants described homelessness as having to live in “dumps”, having no place to live, living with friends/relatives, in boxes, alleys, tents and doorways.

Participants indicated that:

- There is a need for subsidized housing.
- Income assistance rates are too low, compared to the cost of housing, and that emergency housing including cold/wet weather beds was needed.
- Many people are “couch surfing”.
- Women are being forced to share housing with strangers, resulting in unsafe living conditions.
- The “system” is inflexible.
- It is hard to find housing or a job when one doesn't have an address, money for transportation or decent clothes
- People with learning disabilities need help to access schooling and services
- Sometimes jail is an easier option to trying to negotiate support systems
- Supportive housing would help people stay out of jail and reduce the amount of crime and substance misuse.

The Regional Homelessness Plan for Greater Vancouver

This plan, prepared for the Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee was published in March of 2001.

The purpose of the plan was to identify policies and actions that can be implemented throughout the region by all levels of government and the private and non-profit sectors to prevent

and alleviate homelessness, and the risk of homelessness.

The report indicates that:

- Although there are 23 facilities providing 528 emergency beds (42 youth beds) in the region, there are no such facilities or beds in Ridge Meadows
- 25% of clients at 2 Vancouver shelters were from the rest of the region, province or out of province.
- Youth under the age of 16 can stay at Covenant House in Vancouver. However after only two years of operation, Covenant House turns away several youth each night.
- There is an insufficient supply of supportive housing for all client groups including youth.
- Addictions play a central role in the exploitation of children in the sex trade. Pimps use relatively inexpensive crack cocaine to lure young people into prostitution.
- Access to drug and alcohol treatment services is a problem everywhere in the lower mainland. This contributes to homelessness.
- Parental abuse or neglect is often the reason for youth becoming homeless.
- Youth in care are at risk of homelessness because of limited support networks

The report documents a number of policy statements and strategies as well as an inventory of existing resources for homeless youth in the Lower Mainland.

Listening to BC Youth: Simon Fraser/Burnaby Region – The McCreary Centre Society

This report documents the regional results of the Adolescent Health Survey II, published in 1999 (3,755 students in grades 7-12 surveyed in the region).

Some highlights:

- 67% of youth in the region consider themselves to be above average students.
- Girls in the region tend to like school more than boys, although liking school generally declines for both sexes as grade level rises.

- Most youth in the region consider their health to be good or excellent, however many students report being troubled by health problems during the past 6 months.
- 38% of males and 46% of females report experiencing emotional health problems more than once a week.
- Over half of all female students in the region are trying to lose weight.
- There is room for improvement in injury prevention behaviours among teens in the region.
- 11% of females and 3% of males say they have been sexually abused.
- 12% of males and 17% of females say they have been physically abused.
- 40% of males and 24% of females always feel safe walking in their neighbourhood at night..
- About one quarter of youth in the region have experimented or are currently experimenting with cigarettes. Of current or regular smokers, 73% say they have tried to quit in the past 6 months.
- Most students in the region have experimented with alcohol. About 8% of youth in the region have used alcohol on 100 or more days in their life. 4% of students reported binge drinking behaviour.
- 32% of students have used marijuana and 10% have used marijuana 40 or more times.
- 59% of sexually active youth in the region say they used a condom the last time they had sex.

Families continue to be key in determining choices and actions that impact on youth health. Youth who are strongly connected with parents appear less likely to engage in risky behaviour. Students with a stronger sense of school connectedness are less likely to be involved in physical fighting or to try alcohol or marijuana.

The Adolescent Health Survey—The McCreary Centre Society

No Place to Call Home: A Profile of

Street Youth In British Columbia McCreary Centre Society (2001)

This study presents the results of a wide ranging survey of street youth in six BC communities. Although Maple Ridge was not included, youth in Mission, Langley and Surrey White Rock were surveyed. The term “street youth” was used to describe adolescents under the age of 19 who are living on the street or are involved in street life to a significant extent.

The results show clearly that “street youth are

For non-urban areas, the key challenge related to street youth is to keep them in the community—in school and connected to social programs that provide positive influences.

No Place to Call Home—The McCreary Centre

not an exclusively urban concern. Youth from smaller centres tend to migrate to the cities, inflating the number of street or homeless youth in Vancouver and Victoria.”

The report also demonstrates that:

- Suburban and non-urban communities also have sizeable populations of youth who are involved in very high risk behaviours.
- Without significant change, the behaviours of street youth are likely to pose major obstacles to their well-being throughout their lives.
- About two thirds of street youth have run away from home one or more times and over half have been kicked out of home.
- About two thirds of street youth are still in school. Nearly 9 in 10 street youth have been suspended or expelled from school at some time.
- Most street youth have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse, and over one third have been in government care.
- Street youth have very high rates of using drugs, alcohol and tobacco use, and engaging in unprotected sex. Over a quarter of them have attempted suicide in the past year.
- An unexpectedly high number of street youth say they want to continue their education. Programs and services that build on

this potential may have the best chance of helping them to overcome the obstacles that stand in their way.

Characteristics of Street Involved People Using a Mobile Health Outreach in the Simon Fraser Region: Final Report. (Bognar & Associates 2000)

This report documented the characteristics of people using a Simon Fraser Health Region mobile health outreach, which operated for three evenings a week, over a 16-week period, between May and August 2000.

The goal of the project was to develop community specific profiles of street-involved people within the region. Vehicles staffed with two outreach nurses traveled through the region (Tri-Cities, Ridge Meadows, Burnaby and New Westminister).

The nurses were encouraged to explore the areas with a view to locating street involved people and others at risk for STD/HIV. They employed a check list to record their observations as well as demographic information relating to health issues, health resources utilized over the past year, and service gaps.

The outreach nurses made about 240 new contacts in Ridge Meadows during the course of the project. Just over half of these were males. The study found that overall, clients in Burnaby and New Westminister had the highest levels of health risks. However the study also determined that:

- In Ridge Meadows the clients tended to be younger than those in Burnaby – New Westminister; three quarters of new contacts in Ridge Meadows were with young people ages 14 to 19.
- One or more health issues were identified for about 30% of the contacts in Ridge Meadows. 44% of these related to STDs and/or HIV (about 40 contacts)
- About 15% of Ridge Meadows contacts self-identified as injection drug users, and there were over 30 transactions involving syringe exchange.

- The outreach nurses noted occasional findings of used syringes at various locations in the area including parks, and behind corner stores and other places frequented by youth.

“Three quarters of new contacts in Ridge Meadows were with young people ages 14 to 19”.

Characteristics of Street Involved People Using a Mobile Health Outreach in the SFHR

Simon Fraser Health Region Mental Health Services Community Needs Assessment (InfoWest Consulting, 2001)

This community needs assessment was conducted for Mental Health Services, Simon Fraser Health Region, to document the perspectives of a broad base of clients and stakeholders concerning the mental health services and needs of the Region.

The youth population was identified by respondents as not being well served. Respondents recommended that the continuum of services for youth should be substantially enhanced, and that the Simon Fraser Health Region should urge the Ministry for Children and Family Development (which has primary responsibility for mental health services for youth) to develop necessary services in collaboration with the Health Region. It was recommended that these services include:

- In-patient beds specifically dedicated for youth, and staffed by those trained in the field, including child psychiatric staff.
- Expansion of housing services for youth including more Supported Independent Living units, specialized boarding homes, and step-up and step-down services/facilities for youth.

WHY: A Safe Place for Youth,

(Community Services Council and Youth Services Canada)

This project, conducted in 1998/99 documented the need for a safe housing for youth, through a videotape involving street workers, street involved youth, school counselors and youth workers.

Simon Fraser Health Region Regional HIV/AIDS Plan (2001-2004)

This plan documents goals and objectives relating to reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS infection in the region.

While the plan does not document needs of youth with respect to HIV/AIDS prevention and services, it grew out of a community based identification of needs.

Objectives in the plan related to the youth population are:

- Develop comprehensive HIV/AIDS educational plan including target groups of the general population, children, youth, cultural groups, outreach workers and connections.
- Promote and foster needle exchange services in all SFHR communities
- Continue to integrate HIV/AIDS education, and testing into current SFHR STD, Needle Exchange and Youth Clinic services and take advantage of opportunities for improvement, expansion and initiation of new services where possible.
- Work with aboriginal leaders to identify issues, strategies and potential partnerships on prevention and education issues.
- Establish comprehensive HIV/AIDS services in each community.

Building Community Solutions: Community Impact Profile For Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Katzie (November, 2001—Anne K. Morrison Consulting, Ltd., Legacy Heritage Consultants, Cherie Enns Consultant)

This project, sponsored by The United Way of the Lower Mainland is presently nearing completion.

A draft report on the project details indicators with respect to population, children and youth, education, health, environment and public safety. These indicators, as well as the results of a community survey which includes data collected from thirty-nine pre-teens, twenty-five 15-19 year olds, and thirty-one 20-30 year olds are relevant to this youth needs assessment.

The researcher encourages those working with youth in the community to access this report upon its completion (projected January 2002).

The purpose of these meetings was to provide

phase II

meetings with key informants

the researcher with a local perspective on the issues for youth at risk, and how service providers are dealing with these issues, prior to developing a survey instrument.

All programs providing services to youth were not interviewed—the process was discontinued when saturation was reached, in terms of identifying the most pressing needs for youth at risk.

Ridge Meadows Youth & Justice Advocacy Association

The Youth & Justice Advocacy Association is a diversion program for youth making a first offence. Young people are referred to the program by the Crown or RCMP.

The offender, his or her parents, and the victim(s) meet with a committee to discuss the offence. Then the committee decides on an appropriate consequence and assigns a volunteer mentor to ensure that the agreed upon restitution is made, and assist the youth through the diversion process. Mentors are trained and meet regularly for information sharing and support. There are currently 28 mentors in the program. They typically work with the youth for 4 to 6 months. There are 35 – 50 young people in the program at any given time.

The program has enjoyed considerable success. Since its inception in 1994, 909 youth have participated in diversion, with a success rate (number of youth who do not re-offend) of 89.32%.

First offences by youth in the diversion program have mostly involved theft, assault, breaking and entering, mischief, and possession of a controlled substance. Youth who have been caught with possession of drugs are taken into the program, however those charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking are not.

According to program co-coordinator, cases coming before the committee are becoming increasingly challenging.

The coordinator sees the greatest need as parenting from the early years. “Parents need help more

than the kids.”

In spite of the success of this program, the association has been unable to access stable ongoing funding. The program is operated on a shoestring with half of the funding coming from the community. The savings, in human terms and to the system, far outweigh the cost of the program. As well, expected changes to the Young Offenders Act will mean that youth will be diverted by police for their first three offences. This means that youth coming into the program will no longer be first time offenders, the opportunity to intervene before youth become entrenched in criminal behaviour could be lost, and the volunteer mentors will be faced with more serious issues, which could lead to burn-out.

“There has been a huge increase in assaults – with more and more girls involved. The violence related incidents are really violent. About 95% of the youth we see are either trying or using drugs. It used to be mostly marijuana we were dealing with, but now the use of cocaine, heroin or meth is an issue. Younger and younger children are using drugs. If we had a youth detox, we’d be sending half our kids there.”

Lola Chapman, Youth Justice Assn. Co-coordinator

Ministry for Children and Family Development Youth Team

The researcher met with the Youth Team and asked for its perspective on priority issues and service gaps for youth in Ridge Meadows:

- At this time there are 20 young people with Youth Agreements (independent living) in the community. However, there is little affordable housing and landlords don’t want to rent to youth.
- There are likely youth on the street who don’t approach the MCFD
- Drug and alcohol residential treatment is

- missing – need a detox (full agreement)
- There is a problem with bullying – particularly among younger females
- There is a need for anger management programs for youth. There is lots of job preparation, but not enough practical job training
- Most of the kids who have drug problems are homeless or couch surfing.

Youth team members observed that Youth Agreements are working well. They have observed that often the youth's self-esteem goes up, when they become more independent. However Youth Agreements don't work for everyone and more infrastructure is needed, such as supported living resources and housing.

When asked if there was a need for a Safe House, members of the youth team responded that street involved youth are being targeted for sexual exploitation, that they are often moved around for their safety, and that there is a need for a network of places for them to go to. Now that the Ministry is moving away from foster placements towards Youth Agreements, this is more important than ever. Youth can be referred to Safe Houses in Burnaby or Vancouver, however they are afraid to leave the community and often have drug and alcohol issues.

We discussed the option of placing youth in need of safe housing in short term foster care, however team members expressed that often the fostering system doesn't recognize the unique needs of these youth. Further, many of the youth requiring emergency safe housing are already placed in foster homes, and are reluctant to go to yet another foster home. One person commented that children are often homeless because they choose not to use what is available within the system.

Youth are referred to the Youth Team through an Intake Team. The researcher asked the intake team to track youth who were homeless or at risk of homelessness over a period of one month. During that time, 5 youth were in this position. Two of these youth ended up staying with relatives, and three with friends.

Alternate Schooling

"Youth are often homeless because they choose not to use what is available in the system."

There are approximately 120 youth involved in Junior Alternate, Senior Alternate and Outreach schooling programs in School District #42.

The Junior Alternate Program offers a limited academic program to grade 7 – 9 students, and focuses on other aspects such as anger management, peer pressure, conflict resolution, goal setting and drug and alcohol prevention. A goal of the program is to re-integrate students into the regular secondary schools by helping them to develop some of the coping skills they will need in the larger school setting. Youth who are not successful in returning to the regular school system can "graduate" into the Senior Alternate Program.

The Senior Alternate program is a full Dogwood graduation program with a focus on behaviour modification – helping youth to understand behaviour that interferes with learning, and holding the students accountable for their attendance and behaviour. There is a high turnover rate in the program. Staff focus on the youth who want to be successful.

The Outreach program is a school within a school at Maple Ridge Senior Secondary School, geared more towards youth who don't "fit" in the regular system, rather than those with behaviour problems. Hours are flexible to accommodate students who have a part time job. Some students are on a home-study program and come into the school once or twice a week.

The researcher interviewed the principal at the School District #42 Junior Alternate School. His perceptions:

- Many youth in the program face challenges in areas of learning disabilities, social and emotional problems and/or drug use. Drug use is a huge issue: "This is the worst year we've had, both at the Junior and Senior Alternate schools. Marijuana, speed, alcohol and mushrooms are drugs of choice. Last year cocaine, marijuana and alcohol were the most used drugs. This year speed has replaced cocaine, because of a reduction in the amount of cocaine coming across the border.
- Speed is having a profound effect on some of the youth in the program. Crystal meth (a smokeable form of speed) is being produced locally by organized crime groups.

- Heroin is prevalent in the Hammond area. Youth are coming to school “high” or with a speed hangover, where they haven’t eaten or slept for 24 hours.
- Naturally, many youth in the program “hang out” together after school. The social group is very high risk. School staff have concerns that these youth do not practice safe sex. “Most sex happens when they are under the influence. There have been some incidences of date rape. We are very vigilant about these kids at risk, and participate in the Sexual Exploitation committee.”

The principal would like to see the waiting list for alcohol and drug counseling reduced, as well as more involvement youth serving agencies within the school setting. “We need to work as a community to help these kids.”

Youth and Family Conflict Intervention Program

The Community Services Council Youth and Family Conflict Intervention Program provides service to families where the parent and youth are in conflict. At this time, there are 35 families on the caseload. From the perspective of the counselor:

- A secure detox is the #1 need for youth.
- #2 need is psychiatric assessment for 13 – 19 year olds. Unless youth are suicidal and can be admitted to hospital, there is not much help for them.

The counselor feels that although both existing drug and alcohol counseling and mental health programs for youth are very good, they need to be expanded to meet the demand for service.

MCFD Youth Mental Health Team

The MCFD Youth Mental Health team (3.5 FTE). counsels youth up to age 19. The team receives over 300 referrals every year. Most of the youth referred require long-term help – at least 6 months. Some have very serious mental health issues, some have alcohol and drug problems. Some of the issues the team is dealing with are:

- There is a very high demand for child and youth mental health services locally. The

demand cannot be met without wait listing children and turning down those with less severe disorders.

- For children and youth who don’t have severe mental disorders, there is very little community-based, self-referral, affordable service.
- There is no inpatient or child and youth psychiatric day program locally (with the exception that older youth are sometimes admitted to the adult psychiatric unit).
- There are a number of students with mental health issues who are suspended and who never return to school. There is a need to work with the schools to find better alternatives.
- For some really high risk youth who refuse direct service, a community wide effort (a “safety net”) is the only way to support them.

Youthside

The Community Services Council Youthside Program is an independent life skills program for youth in care – transitioning from foster care to independent living. At the time of our telephone interview, the Youthside worker reported having 18 youth on her caseload. About 8-10 of these are from Ridge Meadows. The Youthside workers perspective on the needs of youth at risk in Ridge Meadows:

- Youth detox for the Region is the #1 priority
- Safe and affordable housing is a big issue for youth. The MCFD rate for housing, including rent and heat is \$325 per month. Sometimes people share housing, sometimes they find a room for rent. They also receive a clothing and transportation allowance.
- A safe house is also needed for kids who don’t want to go back into care while they look for housing. Group homes and foster homes don’t work for many kids, and a “transition place” would help.
- While local youth can access safe houses in Vancouver, this is risky for those in drug recovery.

“We need to work as a community to help these kids”

S.D. #42 Elementary Counselors

The researcher attended a meeting of elementary school counselors with a view to finding out about the needs of 10 – 13 year old youth. Some concerns expressed by the team:

- There is a core group of young people (10 – 13 year olds) hanging around the downtown area late at night. These youth are from a marginalized group and often latch onto older marginalized youth. They are often victimized, or they victimize others. Teen prostitution is “percolating down”.
- Transportation is a huge problem. Parents don’t have the ability to get kids around or to homework programs, etc., and it’s hard to get localized support. There is a need for “pods” of activities in neighbourhoods.
- Youth in elementary schools are using drugs at an earlier age. These include harder drugs such as marijuana laced with cocaine . There is a need for more addictions counseling
- There is a need for no cost or low cost family counseling
- Some youth drop out of school in grades 5 – 7, and re-surface as very troubled adolescents.
- About 25% of youth drop out of school in grade 10. They try to enter the workplace without job search skills.
- There were 90 suspensions from school in the district last year. (The school district is presently trying to find alternatives to school suspensions). Many of the youth who are suspended need anger management skills.

Ridge Meadows Hospital

Ridge Meadows Hospital, Patient and Family Services provides three programs for youth in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows:

The Early Childhood and School Health Program offers services (1 FTE) to:

- Children under the age of 12 who are at high risk for developing serious mental, behavioural and emo-

tional disorders, but who will be able to avoid developing these disorders, or will be less seriously affected by them with intervention.

- Children who have developed serious mental, behavioural and emotional disorders, but who with intervention will recover from them and not go on to have more serious problems in adolescence.

This program recently piloted a very successful Art Therapy program in partnership with School District #42.

The Suicide Prevention Program (1 FTE) offers crisis intervention, assessment and therapeutic services to children and youth who present at the hospital and in the community with high risk for suicide, and other severe emotional and mental health disorders.

The Sexual Abuse Intervention Program (3 days a week) provides community education as well as therapeutic intervention to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused, and their families.

Staff in all three programs work with other service providers in the community (MCFD Youth Mental Health Team, ACT II, and the Youth Crisis Response Team at Eagle Ridge Hospital) to coordinate services, respond to crises and manage wait lists.

The issues:

- There are waiting lists for psychiatric assessment and treatment.
- The potential referral list for services has “mushroomed” due to growth in population, while the funding has stayed the same.
- Physicians have trouble getting youth into the emergency special unit at Children’s Hospital (CAPE), and the assessment units due to the demand for service.

- Due to the high demand for direct service, there is little time for prevention work.

Reconnect

This Community Services Council Program employs two full time workers who support youth who are street entrenched or at risk of becoming entrenched in street activities. The workers offer one-to-one non-clinical counseling.

Currently Reconnect workers have about 160 youth between the ages of 13-19 on their caseload, and workers report that there are "many more street involved youth out there."

The issues from the perspective of the Reconnect workers:

- The need for a Safe House has existed for years. Although most of the youth that Reconnect workers come into contact with have a home of some sort, many of them choose not to stay there, often "for good reasons". It is almost impossible to get youth over the age of 14 into government care.
- There is a high number of youth in foster care who originate in Vancouver, Surrey and other parts of the Lower Mainland. Some of these youth are involved in very high risk behaviours, and are "taking our kids out of the area".
- It is almost impossible to access detox services. The wait list is about 4 months, and for many youth, by the time they can be admitted, they are in real trouble. There is no support for youth coming out of detox.
- Sexual exploitation is a big issue, and recruitment of youth is increasing. 15-18 year olds from out of the district are registering in local high schools for the explicit purpose of recruiting teens to the sex trade. Youth are being recruited in schools, bars, and even bus stops. "Recruiters from Vancouver are being very successful. We don't have a kiddie-stroll here, but there are about five trick pads in town. Girls are being snapped up because parents don't believe that this is really a problem". The local committee on sexual exploitation is aware of at least 30 youth who are being sexually exploited.
- A high percentage of the youth in contact with Reconnect are taking drugs of one

kind or another. Drugs including crystal meth, heroin, speed and ecstasy are readily available.

Virtues R Reality

The Virtues R Reality Society is a non profit organization, based at Fenstanton Place, one of ten low-income housing projects in the Lower Mainland. The complex is made up of 51 units with 86 children ranging from newborn to 19 years. 90% of the residents are single mothers.

The society was inspired by the book "The Family Virtues Guide: Simple Ways to Bring Out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves", and works with children and adults to promote virtues such as caring, compassion, consideration, excellence, generosity, helpfulness, justice, kindness, tolerance, unity, self-discipline, etc.

The society provides three programs: The 3-5 Homework Club, The Preschool Program and the Youth Action Team.

These programs involve children, youth and parents in the complex. Youth from the complex volunteer their time, helping younger children with their homework, planning outings and activities and making crafts to sell to purchase program supplies.

The program was started and is now coordinated by a volunteer, a single mother who lives in the complex. It has been very successful in reducing conflict in the housing complex as well as reducing the amount of RCMP involvement. The program has now grown to a point where some stable funding is required.

The coordinator sees a high need for employment, employment readiness skills and safe housing for the youth she comes into contact with. In her experience, families in the complex are often willing to take in a youth who has no place to stay, but are reluctant to do so, for fear of being charged with harbouring a runaway; "left on the street, these kids get into trouble."

Maple Ridge Alcohol and Drug Counseling

The MRAD Youth and Family Program provides outreach and individual, family and group counseling to high-risk substance using youth (13-24) and their families/care providers who live in Ridge Meadows. The program includes

assessment, treatment, case management, referral and aftercare services. Additionally substance affected youth can also be referred to the youth and family counselor. The youth and family counselor identified some service gaps:

- Ideally, the continuum of services would be expanded to this community. Currently the DEWY (Day/ Evening/ Weekend for Youth) operates out of New Westminster. Although this program is intended to service youth in Ridge Meadows, transportation increases the difficulty in accessing this service. The bus system does not service all parts of our community in the evening and youth cannot always get home safely. Not all parents or caregivers are willing or able to drive youth to and from the program.
- There is a lack of service for substance using youth who are not on probation. Youth on probation can access more intensive services in Burnaby and have more access to residential treatment, however again, transportation is an issue.
- A detox and residential treatment facility in the community would be ideal. This would allow youth to stay in their home community to access services, and enable them to stay connected to their support system. For Ridge Meadows Youth, Vancouver is a higher risk community with respect to the street lifestyle—providing detox locally is a safer option. Further, many youth will not go to Vancouver, or are unable to deal with the transportation issues.
- If there were more youth/family counselors in the community, MRADC could expand services to youth. Additional groups could be facilitated including a youth recovery group and a parents group. “The ideas are endless, however more staff is needed to accommodate expansion.”

Kings Inn

The Kings Inn Christian Coffee House and Soup Kitchen is supported through churches, and provides hot meals, coffee, lay counseling and encouragement to people in need.

The researcher met with the couple who run the program:

A number of youth come to the program to be fed. Over the past summer, program staff have met many homeless youth. Some of them were sleeping in the park close by, and some were transients. Some of them were very young and there were drug dealers hanging around the park trying to influence them.

The researcher subsequently attended the program on three occasions, as a volunteer. On each occasion, there were approximately 40 people coming in to the soup kitchen for dinner. About half of these were youth.

Ridge Meadows Arts Council

The Arts Council offers a variety of programs in partnership with Parks and Leisure Services.

Most of the youth attending these programs are “middle class” however when free programs are offered, a wider variety of young people participate.

Parents of youth who cannot afford programs can apply for subsidies, but there seem to be some barriers to them doing so. The Arts Council Executive Director believes that there may be opportunities to do more programming for marginalized youth when the new Arts Centre facility is completed. “It’s hard to bring people into the arts because of a perception of elitism.”

Youth in Foster Care

The researcher interviewed a 20 year old youth who had been in foster care since the age of 14. His perspective:

- Youth in foster care or independent living situations need more support from social workers or youth workers. While in foster care, they need an advocate.
- In independent living situations, most youth need ongoing supervision and support.

Parents

Coverage of the project in the local newspapers elicited calls from three parents:

Parent #1— After years of trying to help her daughter, this parent has finally resorted to a “tough love” approach. Her daughter is now 19 and has been on the streets (off and on) since she was 15. The mother felt that her daughter’s problems started because of bullying in school. She became depressed, dropped out of school and started doing drugs. At one point she went into detox, but checked herself out after 5 days.

Although the mother had not heard from her for 3 weeks, she felt her daughter was likely still in Maple Ridge. “Drugs are very easy to get in Maple Ridge. That’s one reason she’s stayed around here. We need a secure detox facility in Maple Ridge.”

Parent #2—This parent has been trying to help a 14 year old girl who is now either on the street or living with a 17 year old boyfriend. The girl was abandoned by her parents who are themselves addicted to crack cocaine. She has been unable to access help from the ministry, other than a group home placement. She is fearful of the group home situation, and she can’t access independent living funding from the MCFD until she is 16. Her brother is also on the streets. “She is a smart kid, she was an “A” student. She dropped out of school because of her living situation. Now she’s falling between the cracks in services. There are lots of these kids out there. We need a Safe House.”

Parent #3—This parent has three teens of her own. They meet homeless youth on the street, and bring them home. The parent took in two youth (17 and 18 year olds). She enrolled them in school, bought them clothes, etc., but after three months she had to ask them to leave because they would not stop doing drugs in her home. One of these youth is in now foster care. The other is staying with other youth part of the time and at home part of the time. “We need detox and safe housing for these kids”.

Local business person

A local building contractor came forward and expressed his concern about the incidence of criminal activity by youth in Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

He is very frustrated about what he views as a very permissive community, where youth are not made to be accountable for their actions. While the researcher does not assume that the opinions expressed by this individual are those of the entire business community, this perspective is worth noting as an indication of the level of diversity of opinion around how youth should be deterred from criminal activity:

- There are kids who are “OK”, kids who are at risk and a third criminal element in the community.
- Penalties are not tough enough for these youth who steal cars, torch buildings, break windows in schools, etc.
- The problem is not with the police, but with the justice system, which wants alternatives to incarceration, when there really are no alternatives. The problem is not so much with the first time offenders but with those who have offended 3 and 4 times.
- We need tougher penalties—perhaps work camps—such as a government owned ranch, where youth exhibiting criminal behaviours are taken out of the community and worked with over extended periods of time.
- Parents whose children break school windows etc. should be charged and made to pay for the damage, and the charges should be publicized in local newspapers, to encourage other parents to be more responsible for the actions of their children.
- Youth who are really willing to work can get jobs, but they need to persevere and take whatever they can get to begin with. Our “bleeding heart” society has led them to think it’s their God given right to be handed whatever job they think they might want to do.
- The community is polarized around many issues, and leadership is needed to bring both sides together.

phase III

the survey

The surveys were developed based on the input from meetings with the key informants.

The survey asked respondents to indicate if they believed there were unmet needs for youth in 16 areas. They were also offered the opportunity to identify other unmet needs. The researcher sent the draft surveys out to some service providers for input, and some minor changes were made based on this input. The researcher then piloted the survey with some parents and youth, and subsequently simplified the youth survey.

Surveys were made available to **parents** in community agencies and The Times newspaper (22 returned). In addition, three parent groups were targeted: Parents of youth in the support group "Parents Together" (11 returned), foster parents (3 returned), parents attending a parent teen counseling program at Community Services Council (16 returned), and parents attending an anger management program with their teens at the Family Education and Support Centre (3 returned). In all, sixty parents responded to the survey.

Youth surveys were made available through local agencies and in the local newspaper (11 returned). Youth workers solicited youth to complete surveys in and around the Greg Moore Youth Centre (16 returned) and in Pitt Meadows (17 returned). An information table was set up at the opening of the Youth Centre, and youth attendees were invited to complete surveys (25 returned).

Additionally eight groups of youth were targeted: Youth attending at the King's Inn Christian Coffee House and Soup Kitchen (12 returned), youth in a Parenting Youth Program at the Family Education and Support Centre (10 returned), youth attending the parent teen counseling program at Community Services Council (5 returned), youth in contact with the school based alcohol and drug worker from Maple Ridge Alcohol and Drug Counselling Centre (9 returned), youth involved in the Ridge Meadows Youth and Justice Advocacy

Association program (5 returned), youth in contact with Reconnect workers (2 returned), and youth in contact with the Ministry for Children and Family Development (2 returned).

In addition, the researcher conducted interviews with 12 youth in the School District #42 Junior Alternate program.

Surveys were sent to all known **agencies** providing services to youth. 85 service providers responded:

Agency	# Returned
Parents Together	1
Lower Mainland Purpose Society	1
Kings Inn	1
Community Services Council	5
RM Hospital -Early Intervention	1
Child and Youth Mental Health Team	1
Ministerial Group	1
MCFD Youth Team	4
Maple Ridge Alcohol and Drug	4
Family Education Centre	3
PLEA	1
School Board	1
Ridge Meadows Women's Centre	1
Cythera Transition House Society	2
Physicians	11
SD #42 (Principals and Counselors)	32
Youth Justice Assn.	1
Policing	5
Katzie First Nations	1
Youth Services, Parks and Leisure	1
Ridge Meadows Women's Ctr.	1
MRSS Career Centre	1
ARC	1

60 parents, 131 youth and 85 service providers responded to the Survey.

phase IV

the survey responses

What Parents Said

60 Parents responded to the survey.
Of these, 53 identified their family status:

27 – 2 parent families (53%)
15 – single parent families (30%)
4 – foster parent families (8%)
5 – step parent families (9%)

34 parents identified the ages of the youth in their care:

2 parent families:

10 year olds - 3
11 year olds - 6
12 year olds - 3
13 year olds - 7
14 year olds - 2
15 year olds - 3
16 year olds - 9
17 year olds - 8
18 year old - 1
19 year old - 1

Of these, parents identified 10 youth as male, and 10 female.

Step Parent Families:

10 year olds – 2
11 year olds – 2
13 year olds – 2
14 year olds – 2
17 year olds – 1

Of these, 5 were identified as female, and 4 as male.

One Parent families:

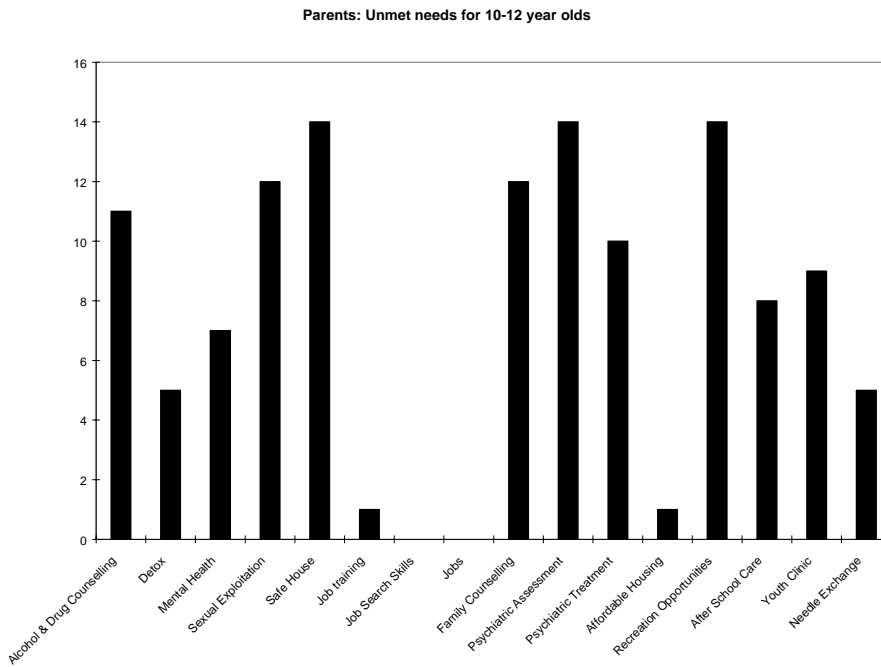
10 year olds – 2
11 year olds – 3
12 year olds – 1
13 year olds – 1
14 year olds – 3
15 year olds – 3
16 year olds – 3
17 year olds – 3
18 year olds – 3
19 year olds – 1

Of these, 7 were identified as female, and 11 were male.

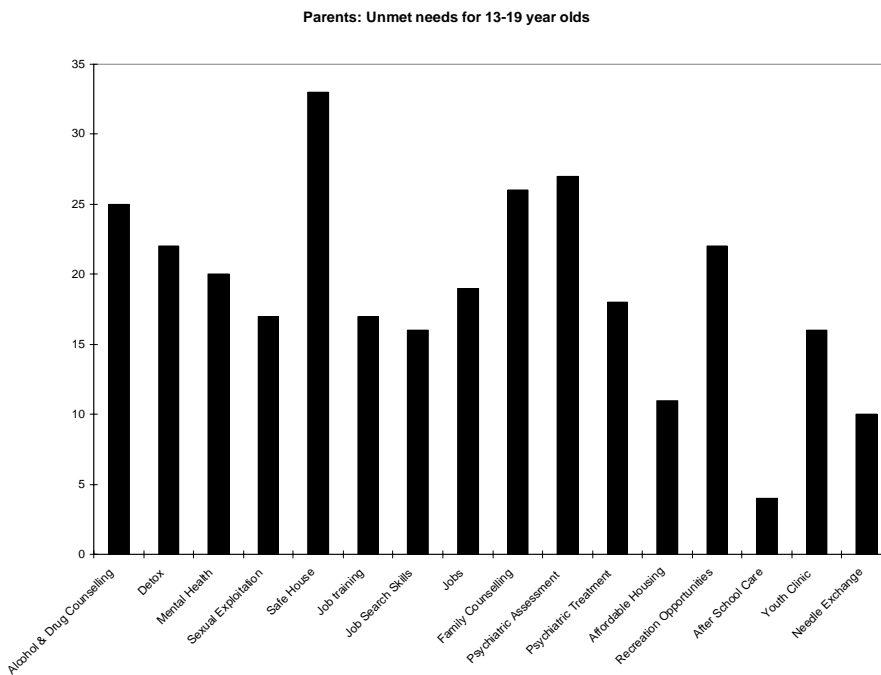
Parents were asked if their children were attending school regularly, usually, seldom, or not at all:

Regularly: 27 (64%)
Usually: 6 (14%)
Seldom: 6 (14%)
Not attending: 3 (8%)

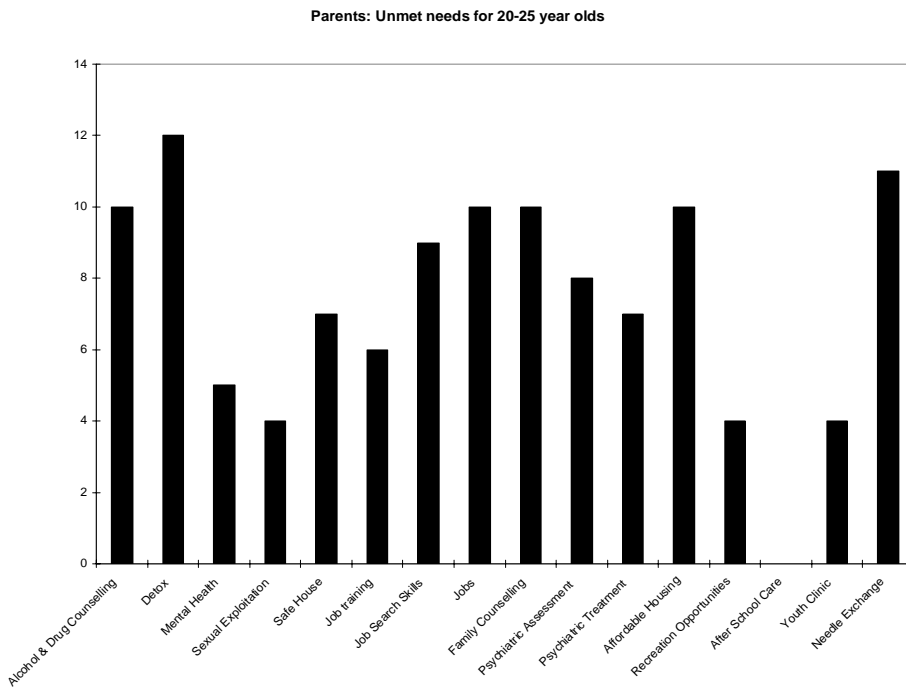
Parents were asked to identify unmet needs of 10-12 year olds:



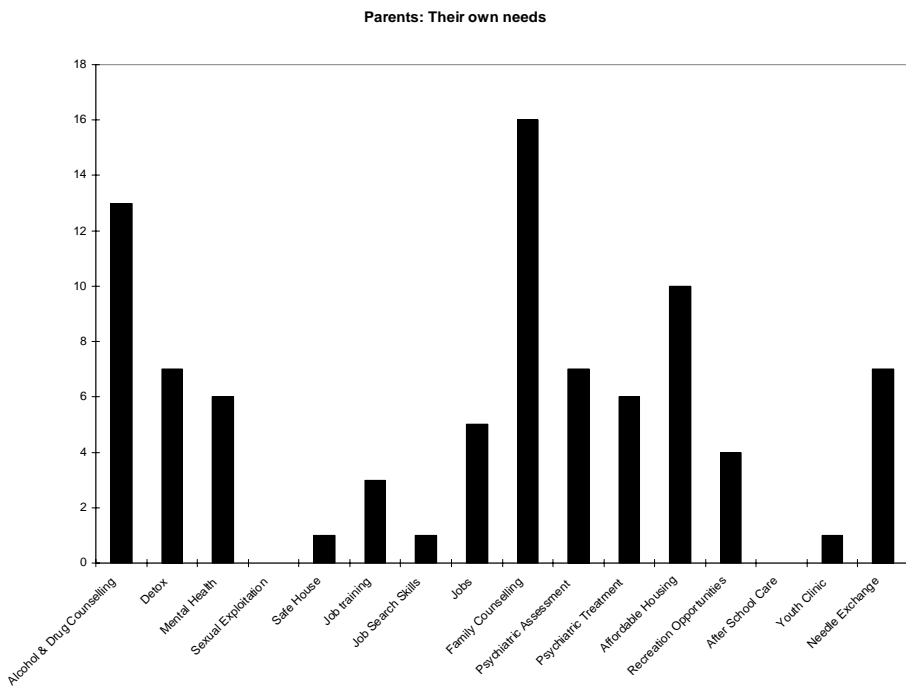
Parents were asked to identify unmet needs of 13-19 year olds:



Parents were asked to identify unmet needs of 20 – 25 year olds:

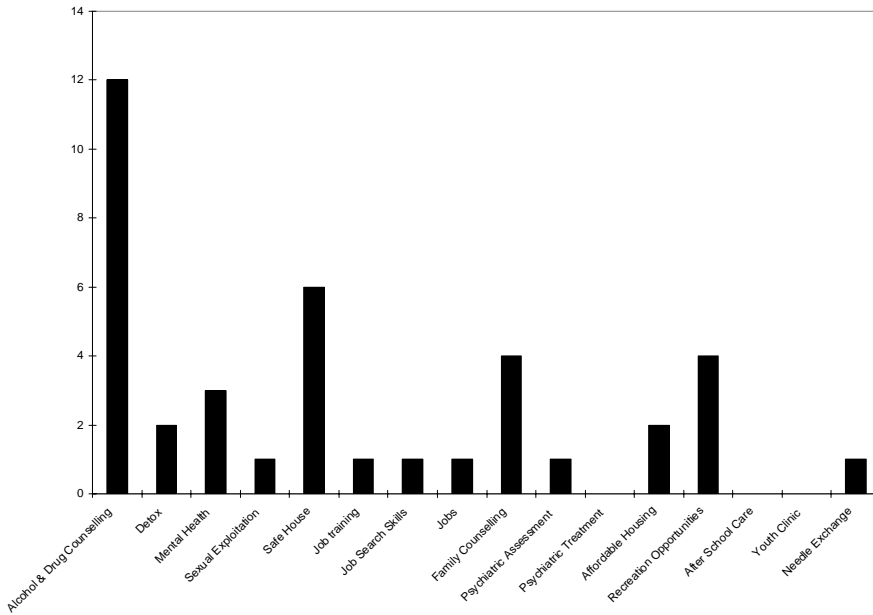


Parents were asked about their own needs, or the needs of other parents in the same categories:

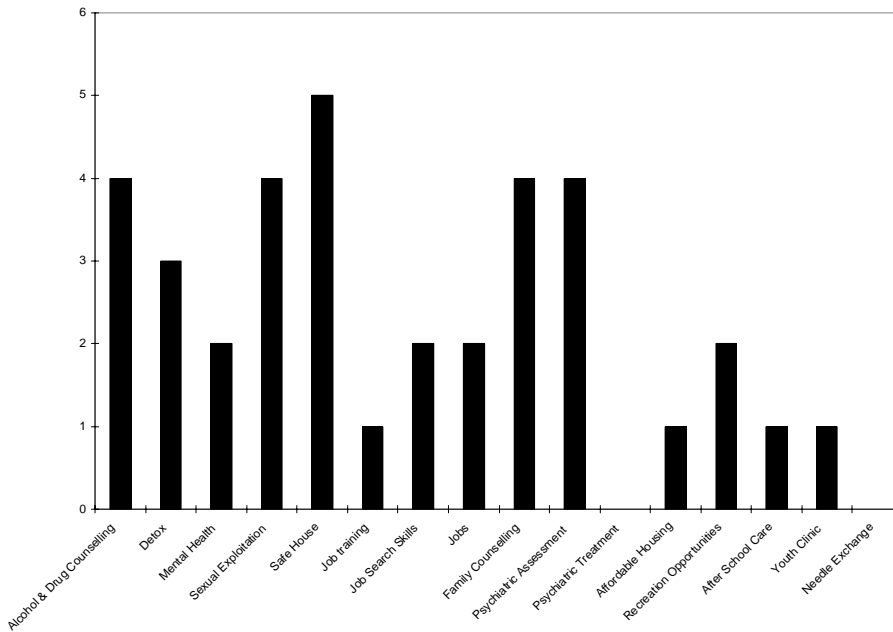


Finally, what the top what the top 3 priorities were for youth:

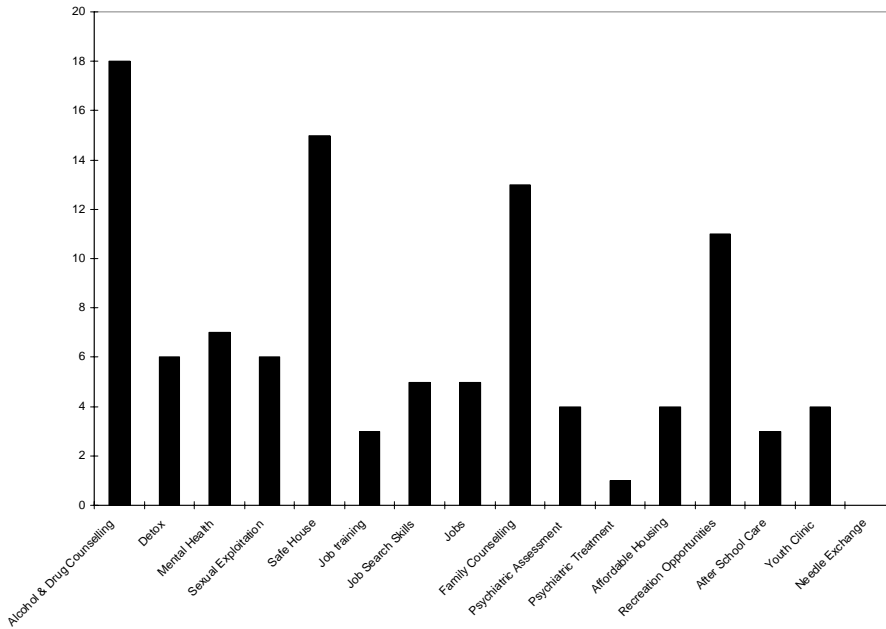
Parents: #1 Priority



Parents: #2 Priority



Parents: #3 Priority



The survey offered parents the opportunity to identify unmet needs other than those identified on the survey form.

8 parents responded to this section of the survey:

- “Although the services may be available it is very difficult to know where to start looking. I think there should be more advertising of these services. I believe that family counseling and psychiatric assessments are only available if you can pay privately. If there are free services available, I am unaware of them....”
- “Youth advocate to help older teens through welfare/human resources, etc. To help them find supportive environments in which to live – especially older teens.”
- “If these services are available, we sure haven’t heard about them.”
- “Conflict resolution, counseling, and anti-violence.”
- “We need more community involvement for teens. There’s not enough to do; so expensive – should be some freebies.”
- “Counseling for parents whose kids have drug and alcohol problems.”
- “More foster placement – not independent living situations for youth. They need role models.”
- “Free or affordable individual or family counseling.”

What Youth Said

131 youth responded to the survey.
125 respondents stated their age:

11 yrs	2 (1.6%)
12 yrs	3 (2.4%)
13 yrs	24 (19%)
14 yrs	23 (18%)
15 yrs	24 (20%)
16 yrs	14 (11%)
17 yrs	17 (14%)
18 yrs	4 (3%)
20-24 yrs	14 (11%)

Youth were asked about their family status:

- 62 identified as living in 2 parent families (52%)
- 32 identified as living in single parent families (27%)
- 2 identified as living in step families (1.5%)
- 7 identified as living in foster care (5%)
- 4 identified as living with other family members (4%)
- 3 identified as living with friends (2.5%)
- 10 identified as living alone (mostly parenting youth) (8%).

Youth were asked if they had ever been in a situation where they had no place to stay for one night or more:

36 (27%) youth reported that they had been in such a situation.

Of these:

- 16 reported that they live in a 2 parent family
- 3 reported that they live alone
- 9 reported that they live with a single parent
- 3 reported that they live with friends
- 2 reported that they live in foster care.

Youth who had been in the position of having no place to stay were asked what they did in that situation:

- 23 reported that they had found a place to stay with friends

- 7 reported that they had stayed on the street.

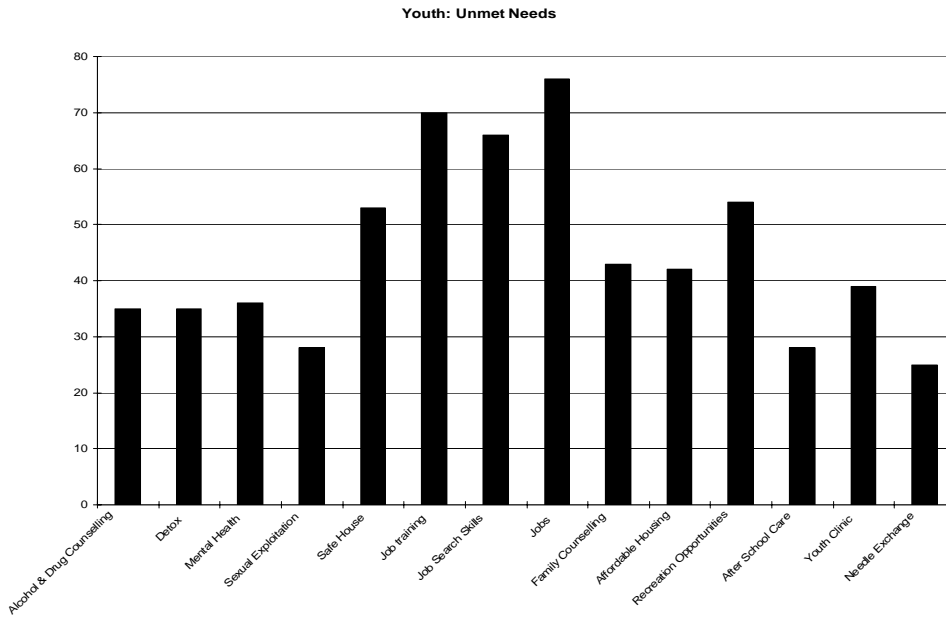
The following responses were made to the question "What did you do (when you had no place to stay)?"

- "Slept outside, walked around til daylight" (female, now living alone with 2 children)
- "I sat under a slide smoking cigarettes for the first couple of nights. The second couple of nights I sat under the shelter of a strip mall. The second time I sat in the tunnel by the wharf, and was attacked, so I sat in the underground parking by the old library."
- "Called close friends, and if I could not stay with them, I would sleep on the street."
- "Go to a friends house till they kicked me out."
- "Walked around until the next morning."
- "Slept on a bench at the bus stop."
- "Stay up all night on the street".
- "Couch surfed or stayed on the street"

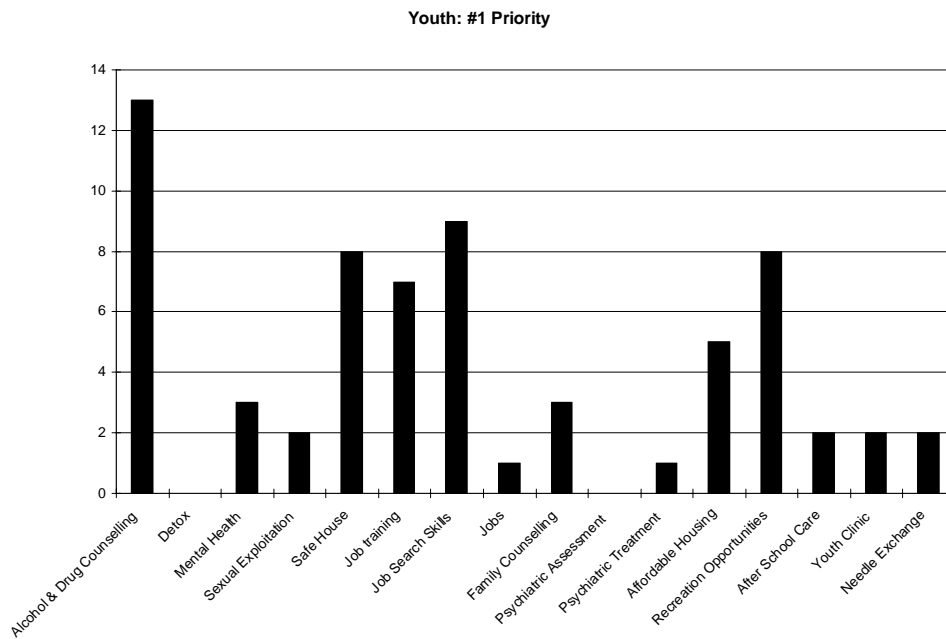
Some youth reported that although they had stayed with friends, they were unwelcome:

- "I was forced to stay with many different friends. I never knew from day to day where I was going to stay. Very little food and loss of good friends" (17 year old).
- "I've been kicked out lots. Went to friends. Lots of my friends get kicked out. I know of one chick who's 12. My dad kicked me out when I was 13." (14 year old)
- "A friend's parents let me stay for four days, then they called my Mom. They wouldn't let me eat though. They only had enough food for their family." (13 year old)
- "Go to a friends house till they kicked me out." (17 year old)
- "Usually found a friend's place, but got them in trouble with their

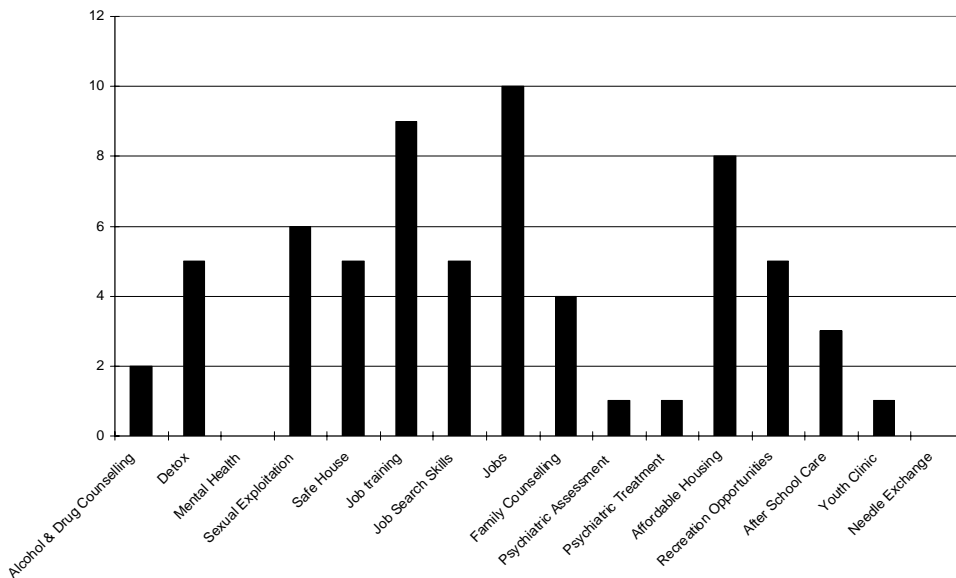
parents in the morning.” (16 year old).
 Youth were asked to identify services they need or have needed in the past and have been unable to access:



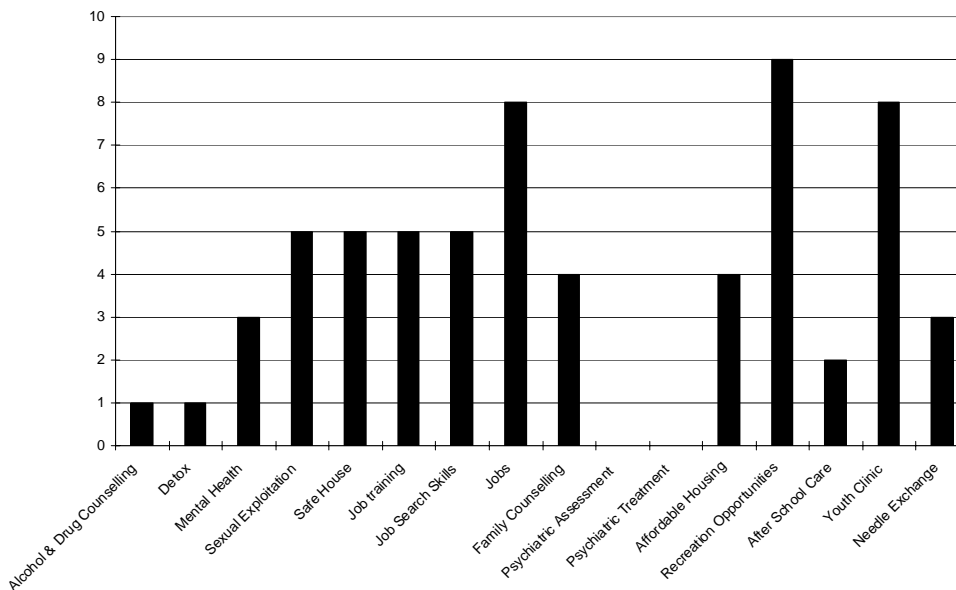
Youth were asked what the top priorities for youth services should be:



Youth: #2 Priority



Youth: #3 Priority



*Response to "psychiatric assessment" and psychiatric treatment are not valid as these items were deleted after testing and simplifying the survey for youth.

The researcher met individually with 12 youth involved in the Junior Alternate School Program:

- 13 year olds: 4
- 14 year olds: 4
- 15 year olds: 4
- 3 youth were living in 2 parent families
- 4 youth were living in 1 parent families
- 4 youth were living in foster families
- 1 youth was living with friends

Youth in the program were asked if there were other unmet needs for youth in Ridge Meadows:

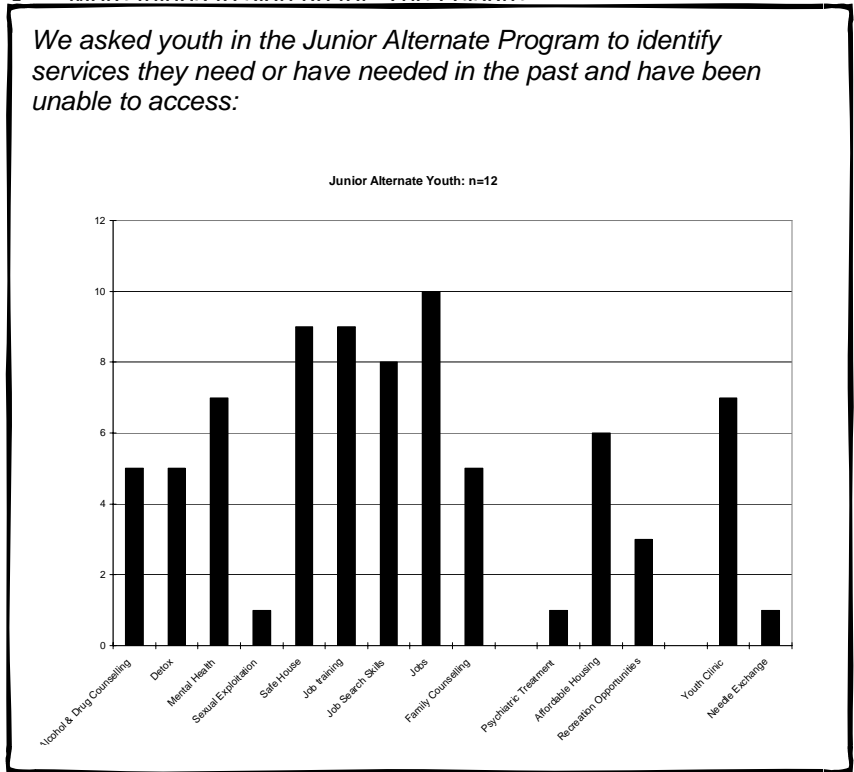
- “We need a skate park in Maple Ridge. No parks are even open after 11p.m. You get stopped just for walking through.” (15 year old)
- “We need a better bus system – there are no concerts or anything here.”
- “Transportation; more places for people to eat (free), modeling, acting and singing classes at school.”
- “A counselor when you need one.” (Sometimes something happens the day after a weekly counseling appointment).

Centre is too expensive.”

- “A park for skateboarders. There’s no place to BMX.”
- “What I need most is money. I want a foster home with more allowance. I get only \$15 a week, and only a \$75 clothing allowance. I want a job, but I’m too young.
- Lots of people need more needles.” (14 year old, who has been smoking since age 7).”
- “There should be a service you can call that will pick you up if you’re stranded. Foster parents get mad if you ask for a ride.”
- “We need more teen hangouts – a skateboard park or something – not by a cop shop or mall; maybe by the 232 Water Park. It’s not cool to go to the Youth Centre. The mall is where people pick fights and do drugs.”
- “We need our own place to hang out – a skateboard park – our own place.” (13 year old)
- “Computer classes”.

6 of the 12 students interviewed indicated that they had been in a situation where they had no place to stay for one night or more.

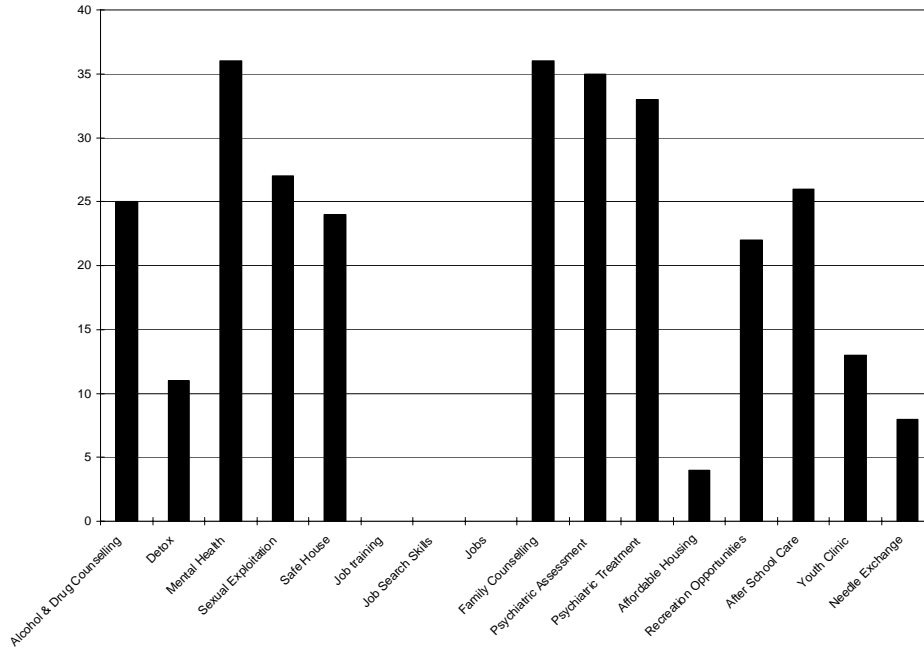
- “More things to sign up for. The Leisure



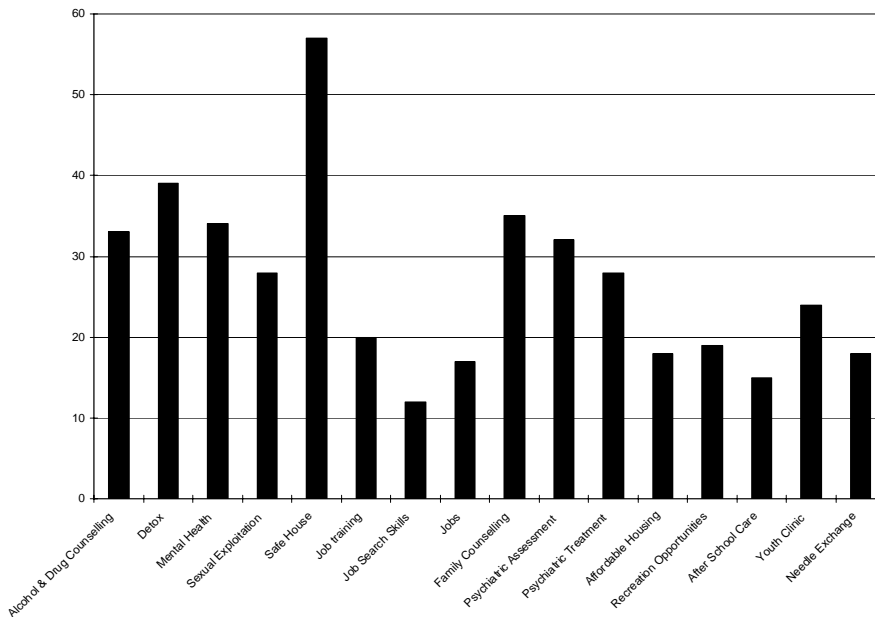
What Service Providers Said

85 service providers responded to the survey. Service providers were asked about unmet needs for youth in the communities of Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows:

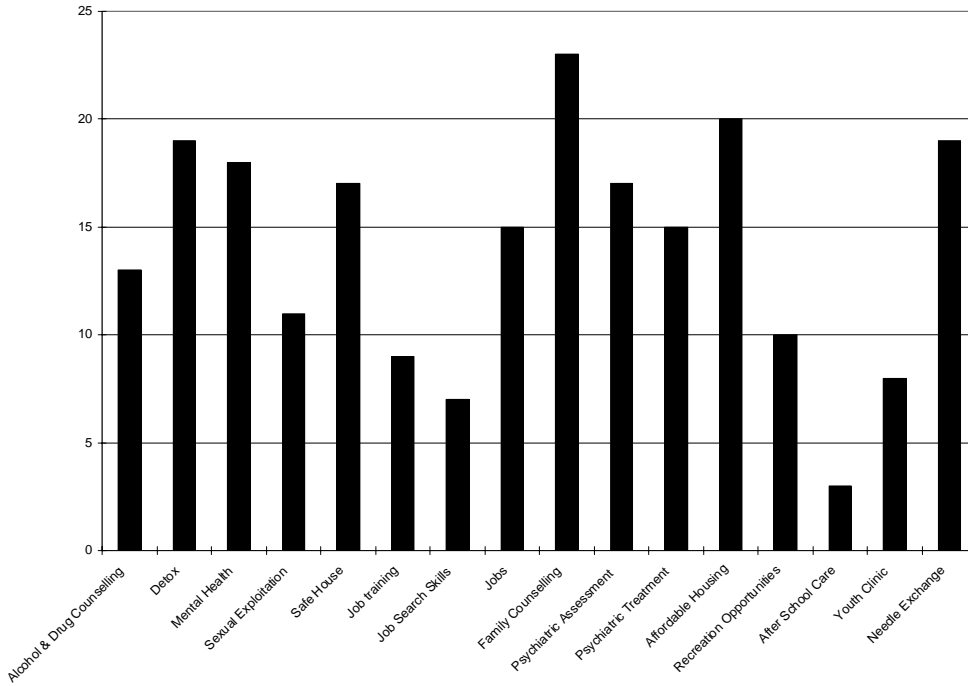
Service Providers: Unmet needs for 10 - 12 year olds



Service Providers: Unmet needs for 13 - 19 year olds

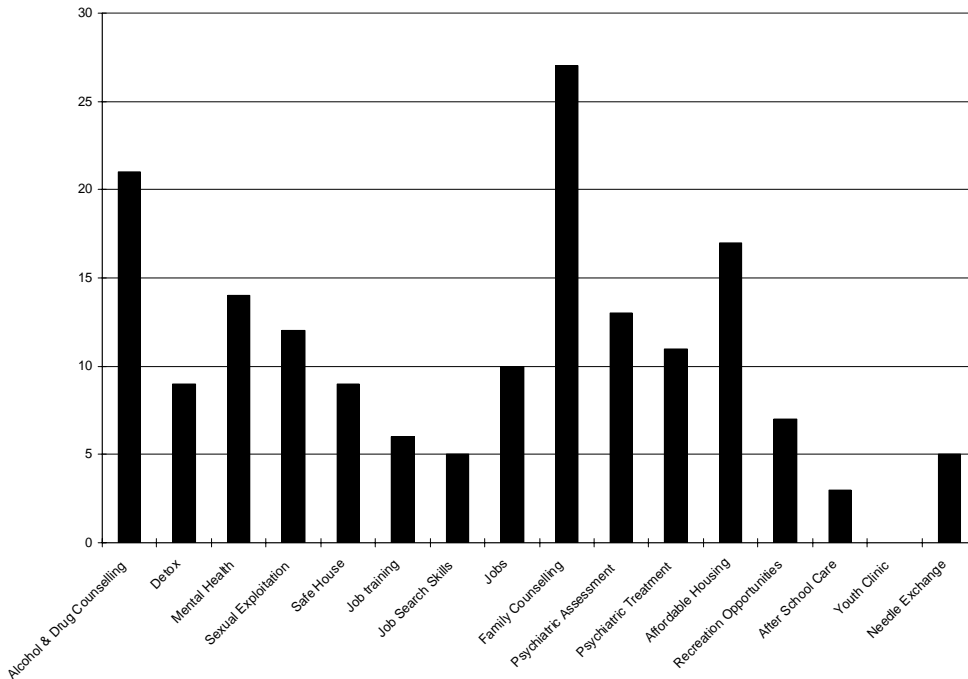


Service Providers: Unmet needs for 20-25 year olds

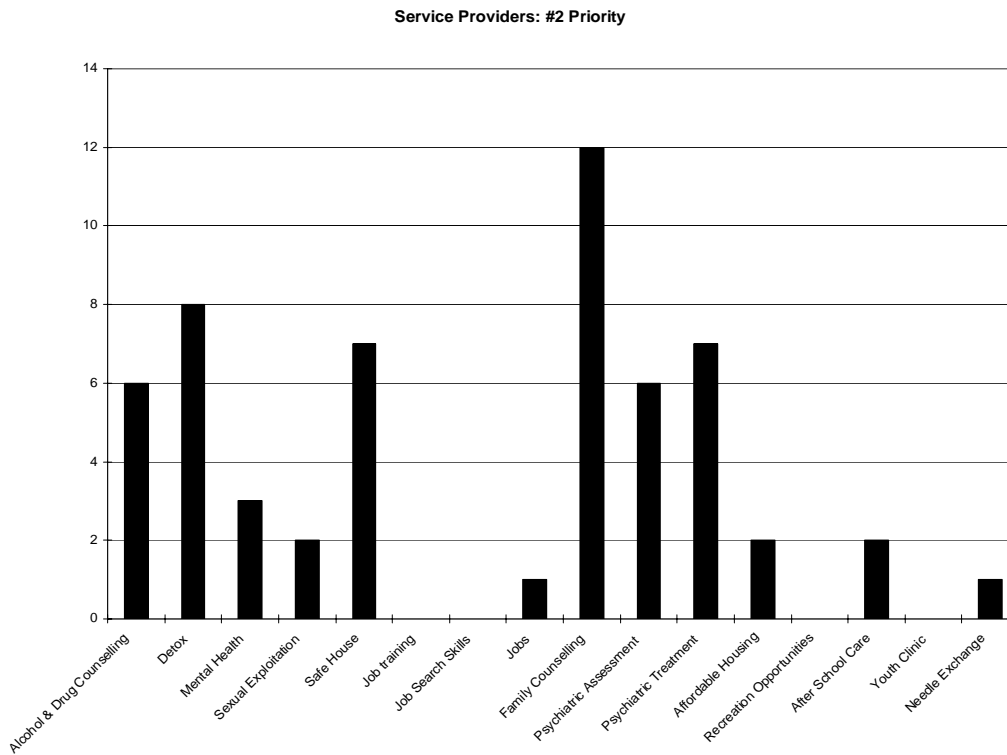
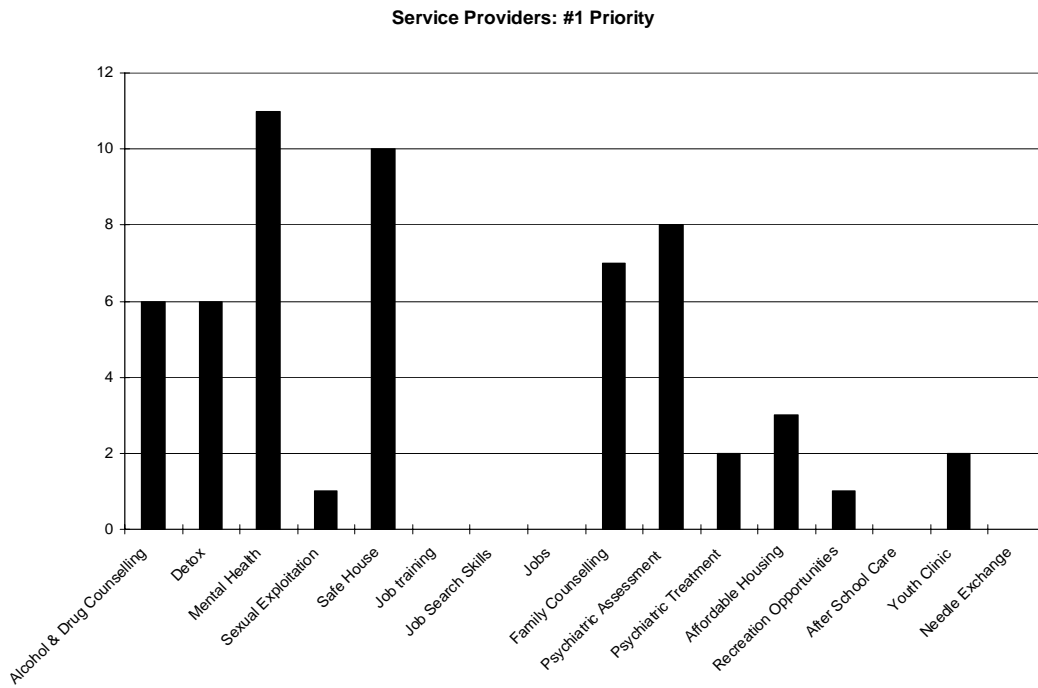


Service providers were asked about unmet needs for parents of youth:

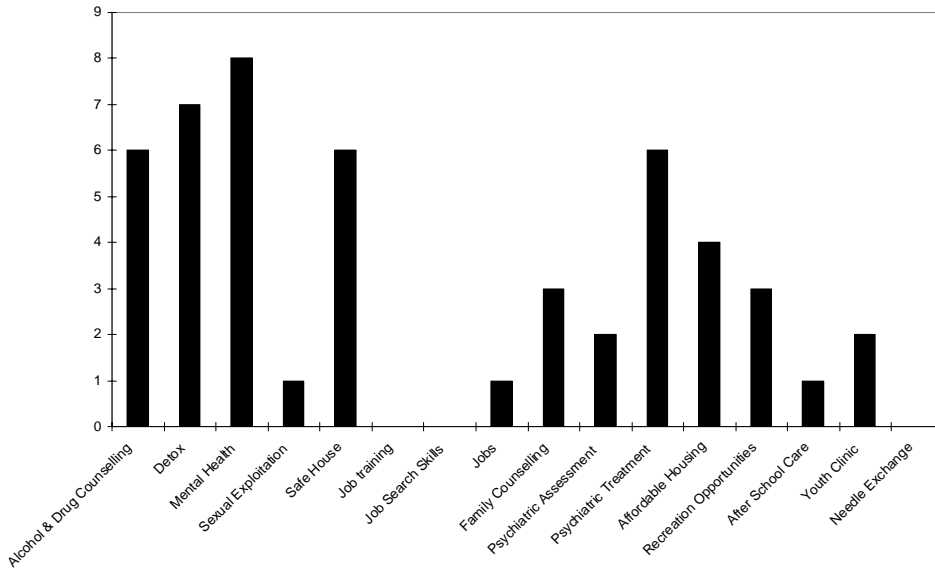
Service Providers: Unmet needs for parents of youth



Service providers were asked what the top priorities for services for youth should be:



Service Providers: #3 Priorities



We offered service providers the opportunity to identify unmet needs other than those identified on the survey form.

20 service providers responded:

- "FAS/FAE assessment and programs"
- "More subsidized or affordable psycho-ed and therapeutic groups for children and parents"
- "Transportation"
- "Free or inexpensive counseling"
- "Transportation to recreation – too many "home alone" young children"
- "Youth transportation to and from services"
- "Suicide resources and intervention"
- "A facility to address a continuum of services from prevention/education/support such as Family Ed and Support/counseling/education/mental health services, to pediatric/psychiatric assessment – preferably in one building"
- "Residential alcohol and drug treatment"
- More therapeutic services (e.g. youth workers) for youth with special needs (e.g. low IQ)"
- "Residential alcohol and drug treatment services"
- "Aboriginal HIV/AIDS/HepC outreach"
- "Positive role models and character building"
- "Long term, independent supervised living – Nelson model". (Successful joint Ministry of Education and MCFD project. Youth live in a motel with workers occupying one suite. They live under strict supervision).

"The biggest need I see is youth aged 13-19 with family conflict of varying degrees, sometimes resulting in no place for youth to live, either temporarily or permanently. Many of the services are inter-related. A safe place for youth, either alone due to alcohol and drug use, family conflict, etc could possibly provide detox services, family counseling, case management and transition to more long-term safe and affordable housing for youth for whom family re-unification is not successful"

School-based alcohol and drug counselor

The Priorities:

Survey respondents identified the following as being their #1, #2 and #3 priorities:

Parents:

1. Alcohol and drug services
2. Safe Housing
3. Alcohol and drug services

Youth:

1. Alcohol and drug services
2. Jobs
3. Recreational opportunities

Service Providers:

1. Mental health services
2. Family counseling
3. Mental health services

To make sense of this data, the researcher weighted the results, with the #1 priority rated as being twice as important as the #2 priority, and the #2 priority rated as being twice as important as the #3 priority:

Weighted results:

Parents:

1. Alcohol and drug services
2. Safe Housing
3. Family counseling
4. Recreational opportunities
5. Mental health services

Youth:

1. Jobs
2. Alcohol and drug services
3. Job training and search skills
4. Recreational opportunities
5. Safe housing

Service Providers:

1. Safe housing
2. Mental health services
3. Family counseling
4. Psychiatric assessment
5. Detox

phase V

the community forum

A community Forum was held on November 27, 2001, at the Greg Moore Youth Centre.

The purpose of the Forum was to present the findings of Phase 4, and provide participants with an opportunity to explore the issues that had been identified.

The Forum was advertised in local newspaper. As well, those who had participated in the study in some way were invited to attend. Sixty people attended. The majority of these were individuals providing services to youth.

1. The researcher presented an over view of the results of the survey portion of the study, and suggested the theme for the forum:
"What can we do to improve the out-comes for youth at risk in our commu-nity".
2. Participants were then invited to take part in sessions using Open Space Technology. (Ref: <http://www.openspaceworld.org/tmnfiles/lindfield.htm>)
3. The tasks for the sessions were identi-fied as follows:
 - Gather new ideas, resources and people, and connect them to the issues
 - Establish strategic themes, clear priorities and immediate actions, and document the results of the Open Space sessions.
4. Participants who wished to lead a ses-sion on any of the issues identified in the study were asked to come forward, identify their topic and one of 10 avail-able spaces where the session would be held.
5. Issues were identified and participants chose to hold sessions on the following topics:
 - Family counseling

- Sexual exploitation
- Youth services for East and West Maple Ridge
- Recreational opportunities for 10-12 year olds and 13-18 year olds
- Safe Housing
- Alcohol and drug treatment
- Jobs and job training

Following sessions (which lasted approximately 3 hours), participants presented the results of their work to the full group.

Documentation of the results of the Open Space sessions was recorded by participants as follows:

Family Counseling

Convenor: Gail Daniluck

Participants: Carolyn Willett, Christine DiGiamberardine, John Harvey, Peter Malakoff, Cheryl Ashlie, Chris Everett, Jim Hooper, Wendy Bastiannssen, Mike Schroeder, Greg Smith, Grazyna Zambrzucki.

Summary of key points:

- The group identified the main issue as being a lack of free or affordable "generic counseling" resources in the community. The "gateway" to existing resources is narrow – to access free counseling, one has to have a drug and alcohol problem, abuse issue etc.
- Counseling needs to be affordable and accessible and that there is a need for in-home therapeutic tutoring for youth with mental illness. A "prevention" approach would help reduce needs for later intensive family counseling.

The group developed a plan:

1. CYFN and the Social Planning Com-mittee are planning a networking day in

- isting counselors could do better by building bridges and relationships, and that consumers and service providers need to exchange/network.
2. The group will contact professional counseling associations for ideas – this is the only community in our Region without affordable counseling services
 3. The group will investigate the use of volunteer counselors – clergy and retired counselors willing to donate sessions. The concept of a lay counseling program will also be considered.
 4. The group will look for seed money for counseling. Some sources might be the federal government; Healthy Communities, Ministry for Children and Family Development (for subsidized fees), Employee Assistance Programs, Unions, Chambers and other sources in the private sector.
 5. The group will investigate the “wrap-around” service model.
 6. Space at the Youth Clinic could conceivably be used to provide low cost space for counseling and a partnership with the Clinic could provide for coordination of a program.
 7. School District #42 could be approached to “rotate” a counselor to provide some family counseling sessions at the Youth Clinic.
 8. The group agreed that information sharing and coordination have to improve. A planned networking event and upcoming case management training provide some promise of this.

The group will follow up on this work with the counseling subcommittee of the CYFN.

Sexual Exploitation

Convener: Cnst. Tammy Herman

Participants:

Shannon Cote, Melita Caissie, Gary Manson, Catherine Leach, Shannon Folia, Shirley Peters, Kathleen Braithwaite, Alice Sellers, Ken Capina

Summary of key points:

- Education and awareness programs

- Amount of reporting incidents to authorities
- Images that are portrayed by dress
- Teach youth to be assertive at an early age
- Safety issues – carrying weapons, hitchhiking, parties
- Law: consensual sex at 14 years
- Education for boys regarding their point of view on women
- How to develop communication with victims and police
- There are 6 high schools in Ridge Meadows – Address issues through school talks, invite parents
- Parent education
- Stop Buying Sex From a Child (Exploitation Week) – banners on overpasses, on trucks, and services in the community
- Need players on the school board
- Pagers and cell phones are a sign of recruitment
- Need a larger voice
- Contact Constable Dizzy (ICE Program) and Gary Cleeve in the school district Youth Education Program
- Safe Houses
- Looking to the business community

Plan:

1. Protect youth by making parents aware
2. Get to youth before the recruiters do
3. Reach out to PAC groups
4. Sexual Exploitation Week – Banners on overpasses, on trucks, at youth clinic
5. Train volunteers for Safe Houses
6. Find funding to run awareness programs in schools (videos) and poster campaigns
7. Seminars for those who are in the sex trade and who are going to school at the same time (at the Youth Clinic)

Resources:

- Children in the Street Society
- Existing programs in other districts

Youth Services for East and West Maple Ridge:

Convenor: Lee Faurot

Participants:

Bob Goos, Cheryl Lynne Peters, Cst. M. Booth, Sue Wheeler, Chris Everett

Summary of Key Points:

- There is a lack of transportation and things to do in West Maple Ridge (203-207 Westview area).
- Possible incremental package for outlying Program
- Have an information night/pizza night
- Potential grant from Community Policing
- Community Working Group, trial column in the Bugel where questions about violence could be fielded.
- Schools are fighting each other (Garibaldi vs. Westview, etc.)
- Unity 2000 project in Coquitlam, Community Development Society Proposal #1. Elementary Secondary "Hero" poster contest
- Forming group that includes conference for kids in school district
- Violence is #1 issue
- Huge workshop that would involve youth from all schools
- Youth Advisory Council – discussion around options for West Maple Ridge
- Possible night club idea
- Mentorship (Secondary to Elementary)

Plan:

1. School District #42 Inter-School Conference
 - Talk about violence
 - Inter high-school relations
 - Brainstorm on how to build a greater sense of community
 - Pursue the creation of a committee to host this conference
 - Pursue at the Advisory Council
2. Youth teams will try to reduce violence

Partners:

- School District #42
- Rotary
- Reconnect
- Cythera
- Community Programs

Transportation Strategies:

- Could get a van wholesale from a local dealership
- MRYC has tax number
- A service club has tentatively donated \$20,000 – full confirmation not given yet.

Recreational Opportunities 10-12 and 13-18 year olds:

Convenor: Tony Cotroneo

Participants:

Candace Gordon, Dave Speirs, Linda King, Alice Sellers, Brian Patel, Tracee Rowland

Summary of Key Points:

Existing Social Recreation Opportunities available for 13 - 18 year olds:

Drop-in Centers (Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge) 6 nights a week, 6:30 -9:30 pm in MR
6 nights a week, 6:30 - 9:30 pm in PM
YOI - Outreach Initiatives;
Whonnock - Monday nights
Ruskin Youth Council
Hammond Drop-in - Thursday nights
Women in Action (Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge)
Boys Doing Stuff (Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge)
Yennadon attempted 3 times & revisit in near future
Tuesday Night Improv (Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows)
Outdoor pursuits
Preteen Dances 3X per month (Pitt Meadows, Hammond, Greg MooreYC)
Church Groups
Youth Councils - youth initiated rec opportunities
Homework Club two days per week
Virtues "R" Reality club Fenstanton Place
Youth Vol Core
School District using GM gym during daytime hours
Leisure Centre, PM Family Recreation Centre
Planet Ice, Twin Rinks, Libraries
Many Sports Groups
Nights Alive (AG's Office)

Arts Council registered programs
Scouts and Guides

Existing Social Recreation Opportunities for 10 - 12 year olds – (There is a big demand for these)

Drop-in gym 3-5 Mon - Fri (Pitt Meadows)
Soon to start in MR Sat and Sun Gym Drop-in (partnership with AG's Office)
Registered children's programs for 6-12 year olds - JackieS/Tracee
Swim lessons
Arts Council Programs
Preteen Dances (10-14) 3X a month - Hammond, PM and GMYC
Virtues"R" Reality Club 6+ - Fenstanton Place
Mayo Place Partnership
After school programs?
School district #42 using GMYC gym during daytime hours
Cubs and Guides
Leisure Centre, PMFRC
Planet Ice/Twin Rinks
Libraries
Nights Alive (AG's Office)
Sports

Issues to be explored for 10-12 year olds

- Few work or volunteer opportunities
- Need for gradual and careful development of programs
- Child, youth initiated programming
- Start small, create sustainable, manageable long range plans
- Build capacity and leadership first (remember the Greg Moore Centre took 10 years)
- Need to give the GMC a chance to work for 13-18 years olds space and time to succeed
- Create youth mentoring opportunities
- After school programs in neighbourhood schools (Pilot at Yennadon and Harry Hoogie this coming March). After school program at Mount Crescent
- Support Community School model
- Senior high school students a good resource for 10-12 year olds (with training and support)
- There are affordability issues around access
- Creating volunteer opportunities—e.g. for seniors
- Every child deserves a champion and a cheerleader
- Educate parents on options
- Independence and confidence building training

- Need to teach parenting skills

Safe Housing

Convener: Kathie Chiu

Participants:

Cpl. Bernie Smandych, Mark Hill, Catherine Jenkins, Paul Jenkins, Navneet Bains, Peter Malakoff, Tony Cotroneo, Laura Frederickson, Phil Degagne

Summary of key points:

- Police have no place to take youth who are under the influence of alcohol.
- Youth with children need shelter until they are safe.
- Volunteer parents could be trained to keep teens at risk. There would need to be follow-up case management. Could be temporary shelter with parents – 3-5 days.
- Alternative—short term—5-6 bed Safe House
- Will there be a limitation on who can access (teens and children)?
- What is the difference between a Safe House and a flop house?
- Should it be a physical structure with trained staff?
- What are the requirements/education to run a Safe House?
- What can we do for teen parents?
- What do older teens do when they choose not to have ministry involvement but need to get out of an abusive relationship with parents?
- A group of parents is pursuing a different model in North Vancouver—there could be some insurance issues.

The group developed a tentative plan:

1. The Homelessness Committee will investigate the option of finding volunteer families who are willing to house youth in crisis or transition with no place to stay. Interested parties will be invited to join the committee.
2. Training and screening would be provided for the families.
3. The committee will look at setting up a volunteer community board to oversee the program.
4. Funding will be sought for a case manager who could plug youth into the resources they need.
5. The program could be coordinated by a community agency, such as the Sal-

- vation Army.
6. Once the program is operational, the board could look at next steps such as
 - longer term options for youth to stay with volunteer families
 - Ministry involvement, Mentoring – back to family program

don't fit teen's needs (i.e. Just Say No).

The group developed some principles from which to work:

1. Recognizing a shared community responsibility
2. Keeping focus moving to "how to" not just "what to do".
3. Recognizing youth as people and valued community members

Alcohol and Drug Treatment

Convener: Tracy Banks
 Participants: Mandeep Bhuller, Kyla Mathewson, Bruce Grady, Bernice Gehring, Bernie Smandych, Annette McComb

Summary of Key Points:

Issues:

- No local detox
- Lack of emergency facilities
- Stretched community services
- More extensive drug use in younger grades (seeing more grade 8's)
- Lack of prevention in grades 5,6,7
- Not enough A & D counseling hours at the Youth Clinic
- Too much access to drugs in the community
- Societal acceptance of substance abuse
- Parental use
- Lack of accessibility to existing resources
- Transportation problems
- Foster home servicing out of district youth
- "Couch surfing" youth
- Youth arriving at school or the Youth Lounge "under the influence"
- How to help parents to help their kids?
- How to inform the community regarding existing services
- Broader funding issues and lack thereof
- Detox combined with safe house?
- Having youth involved in the next stage of planning
- Round table/youth forum over a period of time regarding problem solving—could take advantage of Youth Lounge space
- Where to start—where should efforts be concentrated?
- Prevention approaches out there just

Priorities and next steps:

1. Committed voices to advocate for youth. Public education regarding resources – who's who, how to access. Wider distribution of pamphlets, being at community events
2. Detox, detox, detox
3. Youth support groups
4. Strengthening and expanding community links (e.g. Parents Together and MRADC)
5. Coordinating services and or workshops between agencies: If a person needs to be referred, improved explanations of what the next agency can offer.
6. Prevent clients from feeling they're being "dumped"
7. Detox and follow up treatment locally
8. Utilize people who have been helped by agencies - i.e. peer helpers—agencies undertaking to get this going.

Jobs and Job Training for Youth

Convener: Linda Lambie

Participants:

Mike Schroeder, Generations Christian Fellowship, Annette Clack, Greg Shelbourne, Ruth Wilson, Kathleen Marco Porter

Summary of key Points:

Goal for Youth:

Financial independence

- Build marketable skills using CAPP, YOI Leadership programs
- Job training
- Work experience, volunteerism and job search skills

Parental Awareness:

How can parents receive mentoring to build

awareness of the skills their children need to be successful in the workplace?

Recruiting Employers:

- How can we attach more youth to local employers?
- Are there any benefits for an employer to hire a youth?
- Why are some employers reluctant to hire youth?

Current Resources:

- Drop-in centers at Job Zone, Career Links, Inner Choices
- Employment counseling, faxing, copying, computers and e-mail services
- Government funded programs – job clubs, Youth Internship
- Wage subsidy programs– volunteering to offset training costs

Resources Needed:

- Hidden job market information – more access to job search skills earlier
- Local Career Fair – ITAC, Armed Forces, Colleges

Strategic Themes:

Information to Youth:

- Career Fair – possibly Spring and Summer
- Recruiting local companies/franchises/ Armed Forces/ITAC/Colleges
- Employment services re: ESL, Developmentally Delayed
- Information sessions by Armed Forces
- Information sessions by ITAC
- Job information/resources at the Job Zone

Information to Parents:

- Heighten awareness of community services
- A package made available to the ministerial group for youth groups
- Mentoring available through volunteering at the Job Zone or in a workshop format

Information to Employers:

- Interactive forum where employers and youth will meet to discuss employment concerns and perceptions regarding younger workers (bridge the gap)

- Distribute employer benefit information at the meeting
- Networking with employers via e-mail
- Possibly a quarterly round table format

Immediate Action Steps:

1. Establish scope of interest, and possible partnerships in order to plan a Career Fair in March 2002
2. Prepare a current resources information package that can be distributed to the Ministerial and other community agencies
3. Regular job training information sessions with Armed Forces and ITAC
4. Armed Forces information session scheduled for December 13, 2001 – 10:30 – noon at the Greg Moore Youth Centre

