

Best Practice

Positive Ticketing Initiative

CONTACT

City of Yorkton

P. 306.786.1750

E-mail. dmcleod@yorkton.ca

Mail. 37 3rd Avenue North, Yorkton, SK

Project Date: Date project initiated (if ongoing, please indicate)

THE PRACTICE

The City of Yorkton has implemented a Youth Ticketing Program. The program recognizes youth in the community for positive contributions and good behaviour, instilling a sense of community pride and improving the relationship between local law enforcement officials and youth in the community.

THE PROCESS

The Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions was formed on February 28, 2008. The Alliance is made up of representatives from various community organizations in the city of Yorkton including Sunrise Health Region, RCMP, Yorkton Tribal Council, Good Spirit School Division, Christ the Teacher Catholic School Division, Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing; City of Yorkton, Parkland Regional Library, Boys and Girls Club of Yorkton, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Yorkton Business Improvement District, Shelwin House and SIGN (Society for the Involvement of Good Neighbors). The Executive is made up of both adult and youth representatives. The Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions is committed to building assets with and for youth in the city of Yorkton to ensure that all young people thrive. This Alliance has worked to get the City of Yorkton designated as a Healthy Community Healthy Youth status by the Search Institute. There are only 500 communities worldwide that have received this prestigious designation.

The Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions has partnered with the Yorkton RCMP Detachment to begin a Positive Ticketing campaign in the city. This Positive Ticketing approach starts with police officers giving out positive tickets to youth in the city for good behaviours that are noticed. These tickets allow the officer to make a proactive positive contact with a young person to build positive relationships and trust with youth in our community. The ticket is really the gateway to a relationship between the officer and the young person. The police have been traditionally seen as the "hunters" by young people...waiting in the bushes until the young person messes up. Police are trying to change this perception. They are trying to be ahead of the curve. They want to be seen in a positive light and they want to engage youth in a positive fashion. This positive ticket initiative allows for this interaction and future positive contacts. Regardless, whether the ticket is actually used or not, Yorkton RCMP view the success of the program through the relationships built. Every relationship with a young person potentially equates to one less crime, one less young person harmed or in trouble with the law. This positive ticket initiative allows for this interaction and future positive contacts. Positive Ticketing is built within the framework of the 40 Developmental Assets. Positive Ticketing is making a difference to communities across Canada. The City of Richmond, British Columbia has

experienced an amazing 41% reduction in their youth crime during the past three years. Positive Tickets has been a major contributing factor to this decrease. We are hoping to replicate these numbers in the city of Yorkton as a decrease in youth crime and an increase in positive relationships between adults and youth in the community is a benefit for all.

THE RESULTS

The ticket alone does not change behavior but the relationship that is built is what changes the behavior. Over 1500 positive tickets have been given to young people in Yorkton since June 2009. This means there has been over 1500 positive relationships that have been built between RCMP and young people in the community. Monthly statistics have been collected to find out how many tickets are given out, what businesses the youth are using them at and how many are redeemed. This provides an idea of where youth are attending and maintains communication lines between the Alliance and the businesses. An initial survey (Attitudes and Behaviors Survey by Search Institute) has been completed with all youth in the community grades 6-12. This measures the Developmental Assets that young people report having in their lives. The more Assets they have the better incidence of positive behaviors and a decrease in negative behaviors in the community. A follow-up survey will be completed in 2012 to measure the assets of young people at that time. The benefits include a better relationship with young people and youth role modeling in the community. Youth sit on the committee and are involved in all planning and decision making. This is giving young people leadership opportunities in the community. RCMP and key members in the community were trained in Developmental Assets and Positive Ticketing in the community. Some challenges include informing people about the developmental assets. This has been worked on through mass community trainings held over the past year. Currently over 1000 Yorkton residents have attended the 4 hour workshop. We have had an amazing response from the business community to step forward and partner on this initiative.

Positive Ticketing is a piece of the overall community development which has focused on building a community where all young people thrive. Developmental Assets focus on the 40 building blocks that young people need in their lives to thrive. The Asset categories focus on support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity. The framework focuses on how the whole community must come together to raise each and every child- it takes a community to raise a child. Partner organizations have been working on having young people around the table to discuss issues that affect them. Youth are involved in planning youth events in the community, policies in organizations, etc. The more opportunities that we give young people to be leaders in their community, the better. The overall goals are youth crime prevention in the community, more youth in leadership roles, more opportunities for youth to be involved in civic planning and decision making and to increase the number of assets that young people are reporting in their lives.

LESSONS LEARNED

We've learned that involving the business community in this venture is very important. Many businesses have been very supportive of this idea. We have also learned that it is integral that young people are involved in the planning of this initiative. For too long, adults have decided what will work best for young people in the community. A lot of time and money has been wasted this way. Youth have been very receptive to this and have taken leadership roles related this. Communication is the key for this to continue to work. An open line of communication between businesses, sponsors and the Yorkton Alliance of Asset Champions has been effective in moving this initiative forward. We have held business breakfasts to acknowledge sponsors as well as to have discussions about what is working well and if anything can be improved.