

Boys and Girls Club of Strathcona County



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Informal Mentoring Programs:

The Boys and Girls Club of Strathcona County (BGCSC) is a very new organization to this community. It was created in response to an identified community need, and is still in the formative stages of defining program and volunteer management policies / practices. For the remainder of the year, the organization's priorities for will be building name recognition (i.e. community awareness and understanding of the purpose and goals of the BGCSC), completion of the organization's governance and management frameworks, and completion of a year in delivering programs.

The organization currently runs two programs that provide informal mentoring opportunities. It receives referrals of children and volunteers based upon word of mouth. Affordable facility space is a current program limitation in Sherwood Park. The enrollment in one of the two initial programs has been capped due to the size of the available space, and to the fact that the program can be "bumped" by other users.

BGCSC is reluctant to undertake active advertising of its programs until the organization is better known in the community, its program and policy frameworks are completed, it has reliable access to space, and has more experience in program delivery. It wants to build capacity to successfully respond to the projected program demand.

1) Drop in Games (DIGS):

i Program Purpose and Outcomes:

Purpose: This *community-based* group program is designed for elementary aged children. Staff and volunteers conduct interactive games for children after school. The program is currently held once a week, from 3:30 - 5:30 p.m., at a room in the community library. The long-term goal is to provide this program daily.

Mentor role: The informal mentor plays the role of activity leader, building relationships with the children through participation in fun activities.

Outcomes for Children: Children feel supported and included in **BGCSC**, and feel connected to the community. They gain social and problem solving skills.

Outcomes for the Mentor: Mentors gain skills and experience working with a group of children, which can be relevant to their work or career goals (e.g. child care, social work, education). They also gain the experience and satisfaction of support a community organization in its inception. Mentors feel they are "giving back" to a community that supported them, and their children.

ii Relevant Recruitment / Promotional Messages - DIG:

Youth Best Suited to this Program: This program is open to all youth that could benefit from new experiences in a social setting, and that would benefit from structured, supervised activities after school.

Mentors Best Suited to This Program: Volunteers are required that can make a regular commitment to a *late afternoon program*. Students, given the flexibility of their schedules, are often a good fit. The time of day would be a deterrent to some volunteers.

iii Current Numbers of Informal Mentors:

Current Mentors:

- ◆ Number of volunteers: 2
- ◆ Number of children: 20 - 23

2) Extreme Group:

i Program Purpose and Outcomes:

Purpose: This *community-based* group program is designed for youth aged 13-17. Staff and volunteers lead youth in activities that promote a “healthy high”. The group select activities that are appealing (e.g. snow boarding, rock climbing, archery), learn about the activity, and then try it. The program is currently held once a week.

Mentor role: The informal mentor plays the role of activity leader, building relationships with youth through participation in challenging activities.

Outcomes for Youth: Youth feel supported and included in BGCSC, and feel connected to the community. They feel accomplishment in facing the challenges, and gain social, problem solving skills, and recreational skills.

Outcomes for Mentors: Mentors are enthusiastic about an interest or skill, and want to share this with others. The group provides them with this opportunity.

ii Relevant Recruitment / Promotional Messages - Extreme:

Youth Best Suited to this Program: This program is open to all youth that could benefit from being challenged to try new activities, and would not have the opportunity to do so in a supportive environment..

Mentors Best Suited to This Program: Volunteers are required that bring skill sets relevant to different activities (e.g. scuba diving), and enjoy working with youth.

iii Current Number of Informal Mentors:

Current Mentors:

- ◆ Number of volunteers: 3
- ◆ Number of youth: 15-17

Current and Planned Program Practices:

1) Recruitment / Screening:

i Interviews and Reference Checks:

BGCSC requires that prospective volunteers. Four references are asked to complete written or verbal questionnaires. The volunteer must provide RCMP and CWIS reference checks. Volunteers are disqualified based upon CWIS & RCMP checks, concerns from references, or inappropriate disclosures in the interview.

ii Orientation / Training / Follow-up

BGCSC is just in the process of developing the remainder of its volunteer management program (e.g. orientation, training, follow-up).

The organization would welcome suggestions for these processes, particularly policy approaches to safeguarding kids and volunteers. FOIP is also concern for follow-up processes with other stakeholders (e.g. teacher, parole officer).