

Parkland and Area Community Partnership

I joined the Parkland and Area Community Partnership in January 2006, when I assumed the position of FCSS Supervisor with the City of Spruce Grove.

I soon gained the impression that the group had stalled and was struggling to find a focus again. Because other members felt similarly, a decision was made to set aside a day to formally review the 'Partnership'. This review took place in September of 28, 2006 and the result was a structural reorganization. This saw the creation of an Executive Committee that would take care of the business of the group and plan quarterly meetings of the larger group.

The 'large group' meetings were first consulted during the completion of the Social Mapping Project to ensure that maps were being created to reflect the community issues members were seeing. When the maps were completed 'large group' meetings used the maps as a starting point for discussions that prioritized issues and created strategies that might address them.

The strategies that were created have resulted in the creation of two working groups:

Critical Connections is a group of front-line workers who meet monthly to share information and ideas that will assist them in serving their mutual clients. This group includes in-take workers from FCSS, Children's Services, Income Support, the Food Bank, NeighbourLink etc.

Parkland Response to Family Violence is a group of agency representatives who are working toward implementing a program similar to the HomeFront Program in Calgary, strengthening resources, and broadening existing services. This group includes representatives of the RCMP, Victim's Services, Turning Points Society, Children's Services, FCSS etc.

The most recent meeting of the Parkland and area Community Partnership featured two speakers who drew a picture of the 'state of the family' as they see it, and one who presented information on the Triple P Program that has been introduced through the Parent Link Centres. A follow-up meeting is being scheduled to continue the discussion and decide on next steps toward supporting parents in Parkland.

The Legacy of CPEF in Parkland can be seen in the work I have described. It has helped to create a solid working relationship between the FCSS Programs in the area and Children's Services, without a doubt. But it has also helped created a collaborative attitude that now sees members from a wide group of agencies working together to create a more seamless continuum of services for children, youth and families in the Parkland area.

And as a final bonus, it has allowed me and the Director of Stony Plain FCSS to be trained as Leadership Challenge facilitators. The evaluations of the first Leadership Challenge Program we partnered in facilitating have sold us on the value of the program and inspired us to continue to present it in our area.

Lorraine Berry, Co-Chairperson

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