Our Vision

Our vision is to get youth in the community to be empowered to develop their potential, live healthy lives, becoming safe, self-reliant, spiritual, and active in their community as citizens and leaders.

Our Mandate

**EMPOWER** youth through leadership training and mentoring programs designed to develop the skills necessary for success and social integration.

**EDUCATE** and foster community awareness through workshops on life skills, and crime prevention.

**SUPPORT** those in need through counselling, employment training, and workshops in financial literacy, entrepreneurship, resume assistance and interview preparation.

**INTEGRATE** all members of the community through teaching the understanding and acceptance of all the groups that enrich Canada’s diverse cultural landscape.

Our Mission

Our mission is to ensure that CACD provides effective programs and services to youth for character and skills development, leadership and active citizenship.
Again, it is a pleasure to say a few words in this our 2019 Newsletter. However, before I go any further, let me take this opportunity to thank our board of directors, members, volunteers and sponsors for again enabling us to experience another successful year.

Over the years, we have implemented a program model that addresses such social risk factors as; poverty, racism, issues in the education system, family issues, health, lack of a youth voice, lack of economic opportunity for youth, issues in the justice system etc. These restrict youth struggling within their disadvantaged circumstances.

For this year, we did not cover our typical program cycle; however, we did provide some meaningful programs, activities and events. These include Art and Craft, Beadwork, Digital Story-telling, Physical Activities, Career Choices and Employment training, Christmas get together, Halloween party, Valentine, Ice skating at City Hall, Fundraising activities in partnership with Boston Pizza - Square One (CACD/Boston Pizza Celebrity Server Night event), Volunteer Luncheons, Re-union Dinner, multicultural events such as Black History Month, Participation in Community Gala events, Community Service Activities to ensure civic participation and community engagement and other impromptu sessions.

To be true to our Targeted Corrective High School Program, we implemented the Black Youth Empowerment Initiative (BYEI), during the last semester (Sep-Dec). This initiative is sponsored by the Department of Canadian Heritage, with the intent of helping us to address particular challenges faced by Black Canadian youth; examples, anti-black racism, discrimination, racial profiling, overrepresented in the youth criminal justice system, exclusion and marginalization in the school and society.

We did not just focus on the High School youth but attended to the needs of the Middle School children by offering the “Youth in Action” project, sponsored by the City of Mississauga. This project entails the production of a mini-documentary enabling participants to develop skills in video production and to expose them to Canadian cultural heritage.

In this regard, they visited key historic, cultural and heritage sites in Mississauga; including, Kariya Park, the Art Gallery of Mississauga, Port Credit Light House, the Living Arts Centre, Celebration Square, and the Valleys local Creek.

Both projects proved very successful and resulted in some positive achievements, showcased under Key Projects on page 5, in the body of this newsletter.

Despite these successes, these are changing and challenging times and not-for-profit organizations, like CACD, are forced to innovate, partner and collaborate to be able to meet the need of the children and youth we serve. Further, in these critical economic times, all levels of Government need to provide the funding support that not-for-profit organizations need to effectively meet the need of the clientele we serve.
Studies show that youth violence has become more prevalent and more likely to involve weapons and gangs. Children of younger ages are becoming more involved. The suburbanization of gangs, social exclusion, discrimination and other factors are leading to more youth violence.

**PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA:** “One of the riskiest times for many adolescents in terms of being victimized or running afoul of the law is between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. between the end of the school day and when parents return home from work.”

**PEEL YOUTH VIOLENCE NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT:** “Existing programs only reach a small portion of youth and large service gaps exist for organizations that are trying to meet the needs of a growing, diverse population.”

**MISSISSAUGA YOUTH PLAN:** “There exists a lack of leadership and decision making opportunities for youth.”

**THE ROOTS OF YOUTH VIOLENCE:** “Within disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the province should support and ensure funding of community hubs to provide space for community activities, included for meetings, recreation and the arts, and service providers. Whenever possible, these hubs should be based in or near schools.”

**Our Response**

CACD recognizes the various day to day challenges that our youth face. The lack of extracurricular involvement makes room for peer pressure and participation in activities that can place them at risk. Furthermore, the unavailability of accessible facilities which is in proximity to school has always been a problem. Fortunately, CACD operates in the Mississauga Valley Community Centre; home to a swimming pool, fitness centre, basketball court, hockey arena, program rooms and the like. CACD is also in close proximity to over 10 schools that we serve, a short distance from Square One, the Centre of the City and neighbourhoods of need. As a result, our prime location and array of resources make CACD an ideal place to provide safe, fun and educational programs to steer our youth away from ill activities.
Sponsored by the Department of Canadian Heritage, to address specific challenges faced by Black Canadian youth, particularly, male. This initiative is designed to remedy the extemporaneous factors which weigh on students by implement workshops in; leadership, mentorship, digital and Black History. The main challenges to be addressed are anti-Black racism, discrimination, racial profiling, overrepresented in the youth justice system exclusion and marginalization in the school settings and in society.

**Achievements:** Participants answered in a survey on their levels of improvement in the following areas

(On a scale of 0 to 3 (0 = none to 3 being high))

- Relying on their strengths *(2.44)*
- Using information to solve problems *(2.44)*
- Open-mindedness and Acceptance *(2.63)*
- Various teamwork skills *(2.68)*
- Understanding of leadership and problem solving as a team *(2.56)*
- Knowledge about slavery and colonization was *(2.25)*
- Critical thinking critical thinking at *(2.44)*
- Obtaining information and research online *(2.68)*

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**Youth in Action Project**

Used a videography approach to showcase middle School children and youth, particularly newcomers, making a short film/documentary. The project saw participants visiting key historic, cultural and heritage sites in Mississauga. These include; Kariya Park, the Art Gallery of Mississauga (AGM), the Living Arts Centre, Port Credit Light Tower, Celebration Square, a local Creek, and other such heritage sites.

**Achievements:** Of the students who were surveyed, the percentage of them responded to the following:

- 90% revealed that the project provided educational improvement
- 80% had a greater cultural experience
- 80% said the project improve their behaviour and attitude
- 80% said the project improve their behaviour and attitude
- 100% stated that the project enabled them to develop new skills
- 80% said that they had a greater appreciation of Diversity and Inclusion
- 80% mentioned that the project provided greater community awareness
- 88% stated that the project was interesting and engaging
- 100% said the project improve their communication skills
- 100% claimed that they made new friends as a result of the project
CACD AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Who does this serve? – At risk youth from Grades 6-8

Purpose – ASP teaches youth confidence, teamwork, self-awareness and social skills through activities centred on physical fitness, health and wellness and nutrition.

Objectives – Focus on achieving government goals of decreasing childhood obesity, promoting healthy eating and increased physical activity, improving student achievement, a reduced rate of youth violence as well as childhood poverty reduction.

PROGRAM RESULTS:

Substantial reduction in misconduct, interracial bullying and gang activity.

Significant improvements in literacy, academic progress, work ethic and self-esteem.

Prevention of negative influences that lead to risky behavior.

Respect and connectivity to the community and its members.

CACD LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Who does this serve? – High School Students

Purpose – CACD Leadership and Empowerment Program is a 12-week program, offered three times during the year. It offers work-shops in leadership, mentoring and life-skills.

(ii) Employment Opportunities - Students connect with member companies of the Mississauga Board of Trade, and the City’s Parks and Recreation Department and use their newly acquired skills to seek employment.

PROGRAM RESULTS:

Students reported a greater sense of responsibility, while learning how to deal with at-risk youth of different personalities.

Students claimed to become more proficient with Microsoft Excel, a transferable skill which future employers could recognize as an asset.

Students have stated to learn valuable skills, such as: how to write a resume, apply for jobs and manage tasks more effectively all while maintaining a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

CACD YOUTH JUSTICE AND CRIME PREVENTION PROGRAM

Who does this serve? - At-risk youth of all ages.

Purpose – To ensure community well-being and social development through programs on crime prevention.

Objectives - By addressing the underlying social problems disadvantaged youth face; we can correct the life course of youth before deviant behaviour develops. Sociological literature argues that youth are not yet committed to a set of values drifting between conventionality and criminality. With this skill set, we believe the youth we serve will be able to overcome the various risk factors they encounter in their daily lives and drift toward a more conventional and constructive life path.
CACD TARGETED HIGH SCHOOL OUTREACH PROGRAM

Who does this serve? - At-risk secondary students in local high schools that rank low via the Fraser Institute of Research and Education.

Purpose – (i) To offer free after-school tutoring services Monday through Friday; students will be tutored and mentored by top participants of the CACD Leadership and Empowerment Program.

(ii) Corrective Programming: A collaborative relationship will be built between targeted high school guidance counsellors and the CACD social worker team. Teachers and guidance counsellors would recommend students to attend CACD specialized programming in small groups (5 students max) to allow direct contact between the program facilitator and individual student.

Objectives - Provide guidance and positive influence on at-risk youth in order to build trusting relationships and build a framework for future success

CACD HEALTH PROMOTION

Purpose - To improve equity in health, reduce health risks, promote healthy lifestyles and settings, and respond to the underlying determinants of health

Objectives - Promote and encourage children & youth to make healthier choices, to create healthy and supportive environments, the enabling of behaviors that promote health and to increase control over their health and its determinants.

CACD Internship Opportunity Program

Who does this serve? Post-secondary students in College and University programs, including Child Youth Work, HR, Accounting, Marketing and Communications and Research.

Purpose- An opportunity for students to gain relevant and rewarding experience in the workforce.

Objective- Currently, CACD works closely with students from the University of Toronto Mississauga and Sheridan, George Brown and Trios Colleges, providing them with relevant workplace experience and the satisfaction of and applying their studies toward empowering youth and transforming their communities.
Testimonials

“CACD provided me with a place to earn my community hours and at the time it was nothing more than that. The more time I spent there the more I realized how much Ron, has dedicated and cares for this program. He has given up very much to allow people in his community an opportunity at not only being a leader but a place to stay and spend time. The dedication I see from Ron encourages me to work just as hard and to dedicate myself to all things around me as much as he does. CACD started as a place to get my hours done but quickly became a life-changing experience.”

-Longam Nam, CACD Volunteer

“Volunteering at CACD has given me a lot of experience. Making flyers, promoting fundraising events, and participating in those events are some of things that I was apart of. Along with that, CACD’s leadership program has helped me become more responsible and a better leader as well. Adding my experience at CACD to my resume has greatly improved it and has given me quite a few opportunities. Volunteering at CACD has helped me and will continue to help me with everything I have learned there.”

-Partik Chahal, CACD Volunteer

“CACD is a key part of the growth of my character. I was taught how to be a mentor, a leader, and a critical thinker. The program helped me learned lessons by having us help Middle School students with their work and educating them about the diversity in Canada. This has been a new learning experience for me and it has helped a lot.”

-Alex, CACD Volunteer

“CACD has played a very important role in my self-development. The skills that I learnt, including team work, social/communication and leadership, have proven to be very useful throughout my time at university. Ron provided us with an opportunity to gain these skills at an early age and they not only helped me succeed in university, but also helped me develop a leader's mindset and encouraged me to pursue law as my career. The experience I gained while volunteering and attending workshops at CACD helped me land several volunteering positions at Ryerson’s student groups, including a leadership position at Enactus entrepreneurship project, which further helped me gain entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.”

-Anishba Sohail, CACD Volunteer

When I first joined CACD I was in high school going through some tough times. It was a place I could earn community hours and stay out of trouble while being productive. After being there for a while I connected with Ron on a bit of a deeper level. I shared my troubles and he helped me. I was in the shelter, battling homelessness, trying to stay in school and hunger I was 17 at the time. Ron gave me encouragement, a place I could be myself and relax, and made me feel like I was part of the group. He gave up his time to talk and help me out, game me food when I was hungry showed that he cared about my struggles and let me know I was still one of them even if I couldn’t be there always. Working with Ron was a life changing experience and I would never give that up.

-Bill Alchikha, CACD Volunteer
Dignitaries at our Black History Month Celebration including Mayor Bonnie Crombie

Participants of CACD's Bead Craft Project, creating their own beaded jewelry

Participants in CACD's Leadership program

Youth Employment Workshop hosted in collaboration with the Centre for Education and Training (CET)

CACD Volunteer Reunion hosted at Red Lobster

MPP Kaleed Rasheed at our CACD/Boston Pizza Celebrity Server Night
Volunteers accompanied Ron to the BBPA Harry Jerome Award

Beads to Meet your Needs

Mark, Sonia and Ron at the Afrogloba Excellence Award

Ron and Sonia with Youth at the President Barak Obama: THE FUTURE OF WORK AND THE NEW ECONOMY

Youth in Action

Farley Flex with Group at the President Obama: THE FUTURE OF WORK AND THE NEW ECONOMY
Gallery

CACD Youth in Action Project

CACD Leadership Workshop with Wayne Harris

Ron and Sonia with Group at the Obama - THE FUTURE OF WORK AND THE NEW ECONOMY

Supa with Ron and participants of the CACD High School Targeted Program

MPP Omar Alghabra with members of CACD

Youth Worker, Kisha with Youth in Action group
About Us:
Citizens for the Advancement of Community Development (CACD) was founded in 2002 by Ron Cunningham as a grassroots organization that works with youth from “high priority neighbourhoods”. Today CACD is a Registered Charitable Organization that is dedicated to transforming the lives of at-risk youth between the ages of 10-25. CACD offers a wide range of innovative programs that serve our youth’s unique needs, leadership capabilities, and fosters civic participation.

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