

Watch yOUR Step Report to Funders

Although this was a complex and ambitious project we feel that it was successful in its outcomes, achieving or exceeding all stated goals and objectives. Consulting with a variety of stakeholders was key to this project's success and there is no doubt that the time put into development and outreach was evident in the end results. We feel that we effectively reached the population we intended to serve, largely due to • the relationships cultivated during and prior to the development phase of the project, • youth involvement in the planning and • active outreach that started even before we had all our funding in place. The Roundhouse should be commended for recognizing the importance of comprehensive development and for funding the development and fundraising stages of the project. Without these all of these elements, and support from a variety of individuals and organizations, we would not have had the enthusiastic and varied participation from both street-involved youth and other community members.

Measurable project goals were met or exceeded as follows:

- A total of eleven off-site and community workshops were held at which participants could learn to make mosaics, work on collaborative and small individual pieces for the Downtown South Park, and make their own glaze painted tile, which were installed outside the Gathering Place, Street Youth Services and the Roundhouse.
 - Workshops for youth were held at Street Youth Services, Dusk to Dawn, Rights of Passage (which youth from Native Youth Hostel were invited to), Covenant House, Broadway Youth Resource Centre and Youth Action Centre.
 - Community or mixed workshops were held at the Nelson Park Health Day, the Downtown South Block Party, Yaletown Community Day; also two resident workshops were held at the Roundhouse
 - It was sometimes difficult to keep exact track of the number of participants at these workshops. Conservative estimates based on the sign-in information and the number of tiles created suggest that • the number of youth participants at off-site workshops exceeded 45 and • the number of other community members exceeded 75.
- We held a total of twenty workshops for street-involved youth; two drop-ins per week for 10 weeks. In these drop-ins the youth were trained and guided by our youth team, with the help of project staff, to create collaborative pieces and to design and create their own piece. The number of youth participants at drop-in workshops exceeded 60. All drop-in work will be installed in the Downtown South Park.

We had much more interest in both the off-site and drop-in workshops than we could accommodate. In the case of the youth drop-ins, we were limited by space and tools in the numbers we could accommodate. We originally set the maximum number per session at eight. We purchased more tools and raised the maximum to ten, which was the most we could work with even when we spilled out into the area outside our room. Even with this increase we nearly always had to turn away potential participants, many, but not all of whom came back and got in at a later date. Because of this unexpected response we also had to limit the number of times any one person could attend. It would have been ideal to be able to accommodate all those interested, but by the time the scheduled drop-ins came to an end the work to be done in them was also completed. In other words, not only would we have needed more time to accommodate all interested, but also more sites for artwork.

This overwhelming interest, as well as the feedback from participants, would suggest that casual work of a creative nature in a welcoming and safe environment, especially where there is an opportunity to learn something new, is something that street-involved youth do not have enough access to. The feedback material from the drop-in participants suggests that youth were interested in being involved for a range of reasons relating to the above conditions. (please see Drop-in Feedback pages attached for details)

The off-site workshops served two main purposes: outreach and community participation. We had more requests for off-site workshops than we could accommodate within the time available. We felt that in doing the ones we were able to do we accomplished our goals and with more time we would have been happy to do more.

- ✓ We had the participation of many of the organizations that service street-involved youth in the outreach process including Dusk to Dawn, Street Youth Job Action, Covenant House, Deyas, Yac, Watari, Gab Youth Services, Brenda Carr's Art Studio, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, Rights of Passage, Boys R Us and of course our partners, the Gathering Place and Street Youth Services. This allowed us to draw on a range of street youth populations who often make use of specific services exclusive to others. In the case of involving other community members, relationships developed with the BIAs, and the community centres were instrumental, as was the outreach to surrounding buildings.
- ✓ Our community support and participation outside of the workshops was substantial. We had in-kind donations of food from a number of businesses both in and outside of our targeted areas including: Yaletown Market, Starbucks, Soup Etc., Jugo Juice, Subway, Milestones, Capers, Bagel Street Café, Stoneslab Pizza and Uprising Breads. Some of these sponsors donated food on one or two occasions while others provided in-kind donations throughout the project.
- ✓ We also had support and input from the Yaletown, Downtown Vancouver and Davie Village Business Improvement Associations who we consulted with from the early stages of development. I am currently talking to the Downtown Vancouver BIA about the possibility of the trained youth being commissioned by the DV BIA to create a series of sidewalk mosaics.
- ✓ We were in contact with residents of 21 buildings adjacent to both the Downtown South Park and the Roundhouse. These buildings included social housing complexes, apartments and condos that clearly represent the range of residents in the five or six blocks between the Gathering Place and the Roundhouse. Residents in these buildings were kept informed of the project on an ongoing basis and were invited to participate whenever possible.
- ✓ The sign-in book for the launch had upwards of 40 names in it and we are aware that many people who attended did not sign in. We would estimate the number of people attending the launch to be at least 60. Those attending included residents of local buildings, street-involved youth, board members and staff of partner organizations, artists and cultural workers. The event was covered on the CTV and City TV evening news.
- ✓ Tile mosaic and painted tile artworks were installed in four public sites on both city and park board property. Sites are as follows:
 - the Gathering Place building

- two pieces outside the main doors of the Gathering Place facing Helmcken and
- one piece outside the Street Youth Services door facing Seymour,
- the grounds of the Roundhouse Community Centre outside the Pacific Blvd. entrance,
- David Lam Park where two paths intersect near the water fountain,
- the Downtown south park in and on either side of the water feature (currently projected to be installed by March).

We recognize the significance of the quantifiable goals addressed above, however some of the most important goals of the project are not measurable in that way. We were able to document, to varying degrees, feedback relating to impact on the youth involved in the project and the communities that share the neighbourhood in which the project took place and the artworks are located. You will find excerpts from this material within this report

Some of the goals, such as the impact of the artworks on residents' perception of street-involved youth, may unfold over the long term and are very difficult to document. Based on anecdotal feedback, however, we consider that the project has affected at least some individuals in this regard. The feedback we received on an ongoing basis from residents who came in contact with the project was overwhelmingly positive. Many commented on being touched by the content of the artwork and impressed with the dedication and professionalism of the youth, and the overall quality of the artworks. Equally difficult to quantify is the impact of participation in this project on the drop-in participants. I think this is best represented by their own words which you will find in the Drop-in Feedback pages attached.

We had a target of hiring a minimum of five youth for our design and implementation team for a minimum of 18 hours/week for the 5 month duration of the project. Through our outreach we were also able to connect with Expanding Future Options, an HRDC employment experience program run by Covenant House, in order to increase the number of team members. After an interview process we hired five youth from our own outreach and took on two individuals from Expanding Future Options (one of whom left the project only a couple of weeks into the training). We took on an additional individual for the training and designing process (approximately 8 weeks) who had been involved in the planning of the project. Due to a number of personal issues he left shortly before the 8 weeks he committed to was completed.

This left us with a team of six individuals, which turned out to be an ideal number to work with for the purposes of the project. They worked for just over five months at 18-22 hours/week. Of the six that made it through the training and designing process, all but one worked through to the end showing the high degree of commitment that had developed over the course of the project. The individual who didn't complete the project left with only two weeks to go.

Youth team members were involved in decision making regarding all aspects of the project. They gained a range of skills from their experience on this project, as is apparent from their evaluation/feedback material, excerpts of which are included in this report (see Youth Team Feedback pages). Although this project had a steep learning curve and the youth came with different skills and challenges they rose to every task that was put before them.

The project offered training and experience in a number of areas as follows:

- With staff facilitation the youth on the team learned about the issues relating to designing and installing artwork in public spaces and about community art and community involvement.
- With this knowledge they designed and created artworks, both individually and as a group as well as installing the artworks when completed.
- They designed community participation and facilitated workshops with both peer and non-peer groups. This included instruction in technique, assisting in design and concept and maintaining an appropriate atmosphere.
- They interacted with non-peer groups on a regular basis including Roundhouse staff and members, businesses in the community who supported the project with in-kind donations and community members who, because of our location could watch the project's progress.
- They also interacted with their peers in a professional yet welcoming manner in workshop and outreach situations.

Through this work they were able to develop many useful and transferable skills including; • professional work habits, • a sense of commitment, • the importance and rewards of following things through to a conclusion, • patience in dealing with technical processes, challenging people and difficult situations, • an understanding of one's impact on others, • attention to detail and • skills in working within a group. (again, please see Youth Tem Feedback page)

They have all expressed that their experience on the project exceeded their expectations and that they are very proud of the work they have done and what they have accomplished. As is reflected in the feedback material, they gained confidence on a number of levels and through the course of the project were able to work on their individual challenges. Many of them were able to move toward making healthier and more positive choices, and during the time they were involved in the project, managed to make substantial changes in their lives. The project also impacted positively on their personal goals and confidence in their abilities although we are well aware that each of them faces many challenges in their new directions and that one five-month project alone can not secure a change in people's lives.

My expectations as the Artistic and Project Director were exceeded in relation to both the level of participation and the quality of the artworks themselves, even though I had great confidence in the process of the project and the ability of the youth, and had high expectations for the outcomes.

Although I recognize that we accomplished all the things we set out to do and that the project had a positive impact, there is always room for improvement. I feel that with more time and more staff it could have been even more comprehensive. This would have allowed us to • offer the youth team more instruction in related skills such as photoshop etc, • get them more involved in purchasing and other mundane yet important aspects of the project, • keep the team employed for a month or two longer in order for them to further develop the skills they had learned through the project • offer more drop-in sessions, • give the drop-in participants an opportunity to be involved in more aspects of the project such as the installation of the artworks, and • increase the number of off-site workshops. This would also have allowed me to focus more on the artistic and training aspects of the project instead of being diverted by administrative duties and would have allowed for the project as a whole to have been somewhat less pressured for everyone.

Since the end of the project many people have asked us if, given its success, Watch yOUR step will be repeated. Clearly the information within this report suggests that this project has had a substantial

positive impact on the community and was a meaningful experience for those involved. We thank you for making this project possible and urge you to support endeavours such as this in the future.