

2013 **YOUTH 'SPEAK UP!'**  
a youth engagement event  
MAY 1 & 2 - SUMMARY REPORT





# Introduction

On May 1st and 2nd, 2013 as part of BC Youth Week, The District of Squamish Recreation Services Department, Big Brothers Big Sisters Sea to Sky, and the Squamish Youth Resource Centre partnered to host “Speak Up!” in collaboration with both Don Ross and Howe Sound Secondary Schools.

“Speak Up!” was created to engage and inspire youth for change by encouraging youth to provide feedback, through a variety of survey activities, regarding recreation, leisure, resources, volunteer and leadership opportunities within Squamish. The event generated valuable feedback that will allow youth serving agencies and organizations to move forward and create programs, services, activities and events for youth, inspired by youth, involving youth.

This document is a re-cap of the “Speak Up!” event and we hope that it will be a starting point that will assist youth in our community to continue to drive and be a part of positive change.

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# Partners

## building community

The District of Squamish Recreation Services Department, Big Brothers Big Sisters Sea to Sky, and the Squamish Youth Resource Centre (Sea to Sky Community Services).

# Purpose

## raise awareness, engage & inspire

To **engage and inspire** youth for change. Through activities and meaningful discussion, SPEAK UP! Leaders encouraged youth to provide feedback regarding recreation, leisure, resources, volunteer and leadership opportunities within Squamish. This valuable information will allow youth serving agencies to move forward and create programs, services, activities and events for youth, inspired by youth.

To **raise awareness** of local youth resources and programs by inviting youth serving agencies during lunch hour. Organizations shared information regarding opportunities, programs and services for youth in our community.

# Format

## designed to encourage engagement

Over 300 youth, in grades 8 through 12, took part in the event, including leadership students who worked with their peers to facilitate activities and meaningful discussions in a small group capacity. Valuable information was obtained and youth were rewarded for participation and creativity.

The 'Speak Up!' Event consisted of three parts:

1. Lunch Time Interaction with Youth Service Providers  
Lunch Hour Activity Survey
2. Introductory Group Activity  
'Hop on the Bus' survey
3. Hands-On, Interactive Group Survey  
Flip chart questionnaire survey

## Survey Methods



Action Research was the model around which we based our data gathering process. This interactive and collaborative approach enabled participants to actively contribute. We used a variety of survey methods to engage Youth; the results generated helped paint a picture of our community's Youth by identifying the following 'Themes':

WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO SQUAMISH YOUTH?

### Community Involvement

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF SQUAMISH YOUTH?

### Short & Long Term Goals

WHAT ACTIVITIES DO SQUAMISH YOUTH ENJOY OR WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD THEY LIKE TO TAKE PART IN?

### Youth Activities

HOW SHOULD WE BE ENGAGING AND COMMUNICATING WITH YOUTH IN A WAY THAT WORKS FOR THEM?

### Communication

WHAT'S OUT THERE FOR SQUAMISH YOUTH? HOW CAN WE HELP?

### Organizations and Services

WHAT STOPS YOUTH FROM BEING INVOLVED? WHAT GETS IN THE WAY?

### Barriers

# Results

## theme based

### Questions we asked

#### Community Involvement

What is important to Squamish Youth?

*This question generated the most responses and the most engagement from participants. Squamish Youth are passionate; they care and they want to be involved!*

#### Short & Long Term Goals

What are the goals of Squamish Youth?

*Youth inspired us with their positive short and long term goals!*

#### Youth Activities

What activities do Squamish Youth enjoy or what activities would they like to take part in?

*Youth have amazing ideas to share! They want activities to take part in and events to attend!*

#### Communication

How should we be engaging and communicating with Youth in a way that works for them?

*How do we let Youth know about what activities and programs are available for them to take part in? How should we continue to engage and inform Youth to ensure they have the opportunity to be involved?*

### Themed answers youth gave

#### Social connections & well-being

- Family
- Friends
- Health & Nutrition

#### Involvement

- Athletic endeavours
- Artistic & Creative contributions

#### Short Term Goals

There was a focus/overarching theme on achieving goals that would facilitate the transition into adult-hood:

- "Get a job"
- "Get better grades"
- "Get a driver's license"
- "Graduate high school"
- "Eat healthy"
- "Stay active"

#### Long Term Goals

There was a focus/overarching theme on gaining life experiences and financial security:

- "Go to Post Secondary School"
- "Travel"
- "Secure a good job/career"
- "Have money"
- "Get married and have kids"

#### Drum roll please!

TOP TEN list of activities for Squamish Youth...in no particular order

- Movie Nights
- Music Events
- BBQ's
- Outdoor Activities (Skiing, snowboarding, stand up paddle boarding)
- Sports (Soccer, volleyball)
- Dance
- Swimming
- Photography
- Volunteering
- Fitness

- Text Messaging
- Facebook & other social media
- Online - websites & email

*When facilitating, offering, or advertising programs, events, or services for Youth, consider creating a 'communication plan' for how you're going to inform and/or engage your audience.*

# Results

## theme based

### Questions we asked

#### Organizations and Services

What's out there for Squamish Youth? How can we help?

The youth surveyed were asked if they attend or take part in activities offered at the three partnering organizations – results will help to continue to move forward in a positive direction supporting the youth in our community.



### Themed answers youth gave

#### Recreation Services

Brennan Park Recreation Centre  
Downtown Community Seniors' Centre

More Youth would attend if:

- There was a fitness centre
- They knew what was happening and what was available
- There was a waterslide in the pool
- There was a coffee shop

Those that do attend enjoy:

- The swimming pool
- Ice hockey & skating
- Soccer & other field sports
- The facility because its FUN and they can hang out with friends

#### Squamish Youth Resource Centre

Sea to Sky Community Services

More Youth would attend if:

- They knew more about the centre and what it is all about
- The appearance of the building was cleaned up
- They knew where it was located and what it was

Those that do attend enjoy:

- Social connection – hanging out with friends!
- The activities offered – e.g. dodge ball
- Creating meals and snacks

#### Big Brothers Big Sisters Sea to Sky

Community volunteering

More Youth would volunteer in the community if:

- They knew more about what to volunteer for
- They had more time to dedicate towards volunteering

Those that do volunteer in the community enjoy:

- Using volunteer hours to put towards credits needed for graduation
- Gaining leadership experience and skills
- Being a part of a leadership group with their peers
- Having fun!

# Results

## theme based

### Questions we asked

#### Barriers

What stops Youth from being involved? What gets in the way?

Barriers were addressed to help us see where there is opportunity for improvement.

Youth were asked the following questions:

What are some of the challenges or barriers you face that prevent you from hanging out where you want?

What are the challenges or barriers that stop you from doing the activities that you would like to do?

### Themed answers youth gave

The main barriers that were identified:

- Transportation
- Financial
- Parents
- School
- Too Busy



transportation



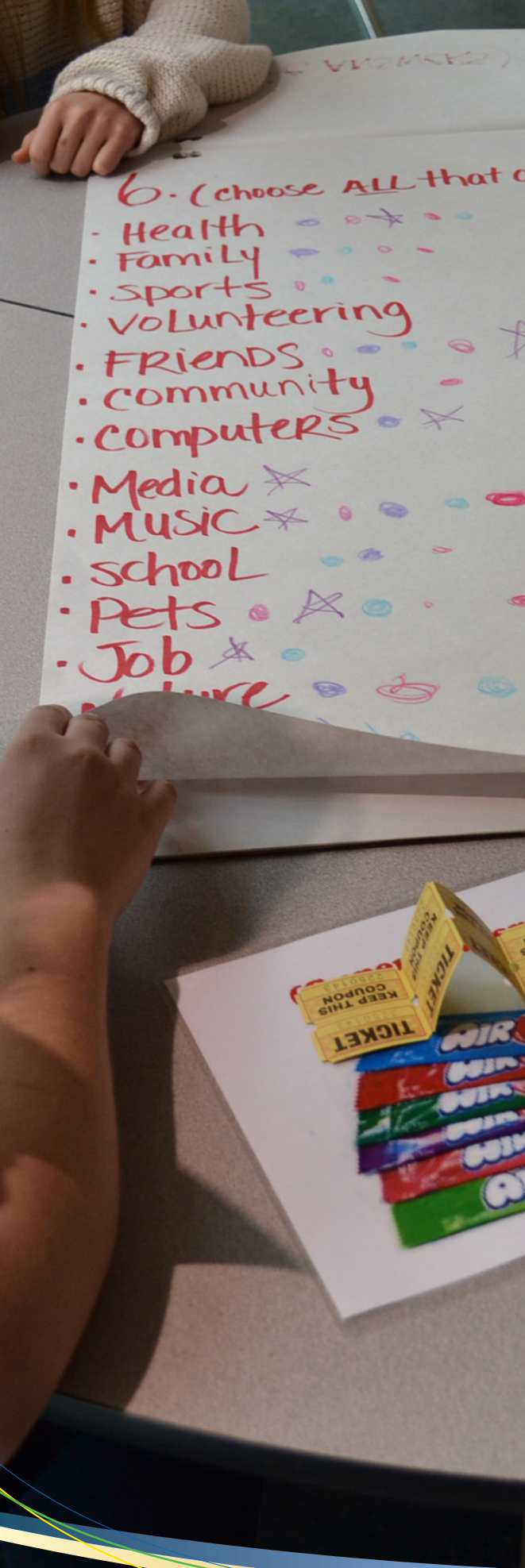
finances



parents



school



# Future Direction

## continue to engage and inspire youth for change

In order to address the identified barriers and continue to engage and inspire Youth for change in our community, Youth 'Speak Up!' partners suggested future directions and next steps.

With the following framework in mind we would like to involve youth in the process of meeting the needs of this demographic in our community.

- If Youth like what is being offered → Keep doing it
- If Youth want it changed → Modify it
- If Youth want something that doesn't exist → Create it

We would like Youth to help us address the barriers that exist for them by seeing where there is opportunity for improvement and have them be a part of the process for implementing change.

## Youth Advisory

Community Engagement – an action-orientated approach

The involvement of Youth will be imperative to the success of a youth advisory and the goals which the advisory sets out for itself. The structure of how Youth would be involved would have to be developed and should be developed with the input and involvement of Youth in the community.

A Youth Advisory would be comprised of youth in our community, with the support of clearly identified community stakeholder organizations, such as but not limited to:

- Recreation Services – District of Squamish
- Big Brothers Big Sisters Sea to Sky
- Squamish Youth Resource Centre – Sea to Sky Community Services
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of the Advisory would be to:

- provide input on policy and procedures
- provide input on programs and facilities
- undertake research or evaluations
- build partnerships
- promote a prevention based approach to Youth development



# Conclusion

## next steps

1. Invite Youth to review the report and verify that we are on the right track - Don Ross Secondary and Howe Sound Secondary
2. Create a process for Youth involvement
3. Work with Youth to share this report with the community to highlight the success and communicate future directions
4. Form and support a Youth Advisory with Youth involvement.





**District of Squamish**

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