

Morningside Heights Youth Sport /Recreation Survey

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goal and Objectives of the Study

The overall goal of the study was to seek ways to keep Morningside Heights community youth safe and active. The study was aimed at engaging residents and business community members in helping the 3T-Program to identify views on the existing situation in Morningside Heights. The objectives of the study were to identify the following: The needs of the community, particularly the needs of youth, the values that are important to community members, with respect to community youth sport and recreation, the gaps in community-based programs viewed as important, and ways to improve the development of facilities and activities for youth sport and recreation in Morningside Heights.

Methodology

Approximately 150 respondents from diverse backgrounds participated in the study through the completion of a survey that was received via Canada Post. The survey was translated into four languages. Residents were encouraged to complete and return the survey with the use of a prepaid envelope, or to go to **www.3TProgram.org** to complete the survey on the website. The survey design yielded both quantitative and qualitative data.

Project Findings

Findings suggest utter frustration of residents by the lack of facilities and the apparent inability of the politicians at all levels to affect desirable positive outcomes in the near future. There is palpable fear among residents in the community of the emerging trend of flagrant gang activity, allegedly extending into the community from neighbouring areas. Community youth also find the need to seek services in other communities. Among others, this frustration can be discerned from the fact that 52.7% of the respondents stated that they were either very dissatisfied (34.5%) or somewhat dissatisfied (18.2%), while 24.6% expressed that they were very satisfied (5.5%) or somewhat satisfied (19.1%) with the sport and recreation activities/services available in the community, outside of those provided by the two schools. The paucity of facilities from the point of view of residents is illustrated by the residents' responses that included phrases such as:

- There are none, need I go on?
- What sport and recreation activities? Other than Toronto Parks and Recreation outside our community, there is very little. Most Parks and Recreation facilities are 2 buses away, everything but Malvern and Centennial
- There isn't anything available within walking/biking distance, which partly defeats the purpose of going to exercise if you have to drive everywhere
- We need a community centre to keep our youth active and occupied
- There are none
- There is no recreation facility to provide programs that benefit children and youth in this neighbourhood

There were many expressed concerns of situations impacting the community, such as gun violence, gang activity and anti-social behaviour, graffiti, and other safety issues, such as break-ins, robberies, reckless driving, and insufficient lighting.

Summary of Recommendations

The desires of Morningside Heights residents are encapsulated in the statement below, made by one of the survey respondents:

“... We NEED a recreation centre in Morningside Heights. Is the government going to wait until there are more crimes? Records show there are more crimes in areas where there is no organized sports. The parents are also afraid to send their children to the parks, since it is dangerous for the children to be there. If there are organized sports, then it will be safer to send children to these facilities. PLEASE HELP the Morningside residents.”

The following statements characterize the 5 top recommendations put forward by community members:

Recommendation	Percentage	No. of respondents
Immediate construction of community centre and provision of all purpose facilities for all ages, particularly for community youth, including a swimming pool, etc.	98.2%	111
Provision of after school/weekend/summer youth sport/recreation activities for various ages	92.9%	105
Provision of child care services	49.6%	56
A service for seniors	41.6%	47
A non-profit organization	36.3%	41

Community members stressed the need for activities to keep children out of gangs. They pointed out that services should also be provided for all ages, including a library and services for seniors.