

# **Executive Summary: The Boys Connection Project**

## **Trail Family and Individual Resource Centre Society**

Prepared by Brittney Hansen

After completing Stage 1 of The Boys Connection project, funded by Teckserv, a partnership between Teck Metals and Selkirk College, the researcher has ideas about how this information could be best utilized and suggestions for the direction of Stage 2 of the project.

To begin with, the key barriers that were repeated by most service providers were:

- lack of awareness and advertisement for programs and services
- unstable home supports including poor parenting
- lack of variety of activities for those that are not interested in sports
- financial difficulties

The things that are currently in use and working well for programs are:

- programs that have genuine coordinators that the boys could relate to and use as role models
- active 'hands on' activities
- programs that target the boy's interests
- 'drop in' type of atmospheres

The most common ideas and suggestions about how to increase the participation among boys in this age group were:

- Advertising
- increase of parental education on importance of extra-curricular activities
- financial support
- incentives
- role model coordinators
- working together with other programs

All this combined information is what Stage 2 of the project should direct their goals and project focus around.

I believe the community mobilization tool kit, Everybody Gets to Play, is a very good place to start the project with. They have 7 steps to work through to assist your goals of increasing recreation among young children in local communities. Checklists, resources, and statistics will help organize the project and ensure all areas and groups involved are being included and considered.

My main idea involves the 90 different programs/services in Greater Trail to work together in a team effort to increase participation among boys. Now how on earth would that ever be possible you ask? It's simple. I believe we need to create one large resource guide for the families and community members in the Greater Trail Area to utilize. This guide would go to every school to be handed out to take home to their parents as well as put in the 'Welcome Wagon' packages for new families in this area.

This resource guide would include many things. To begin with it would have information about the importance and benefits of extra-curricular activities for their children. Perhaps it could have statistics about the current rates in the Trail Area. It would also have other information that could educate their parents and/or caregivers about healthy child development and how involving their child in recreational activities can help. It would also include a list of all the different programs and services that were available. This would be categorized by location, (Fruitvale, Montrose, Rossland, Trail and Warfield), and by genre of activity, (sports, arts, or clubs/social). This would make it easy for families to navigate their way through the large resource guide.

Within this guide, each of the programs/services would have a short write up about what their programs/services offered, cost, location, times as well as contact information. This way parents and children could briefly look at each activity and decide whether that program/service interested them or was suited to them. It would also allow for easy registration because the contact information was right there at hand, it would not have to be searched for.

Also within this program guide would be information about additional funding and financial support that they could qualify for and assist them with any costs. It would also explain the best way to go about getting these additional funds, how easy the process was, emphasizing the confidentiality of these program supports. JumpStart, KidSport as well as the Children's Fitness Tax Credit would be the core financial supports discussed in this resource guide.

Lastly this guide would include information for the parents about how to get involved. It would have information about the importance of parent volunteers towards these programs and how they are needed to be successful and to continue to run. It may also include information about how they might become a coach or coordinator.

Talking with a few program/service coordinators, I have had scepticism about how the community will possibly be able to work together and increase the participation of boys ages 7-14. One even went as far to raise their eyebrows and

question how on earth FAIR was going to go about doing this. I pitched this 'resource guide' idea with them and had instantly changed their mind. Now with the scepticism gone this program coordinator gave me input and asked how they could get involved and how could they be of assistance to me. I have had great feedback and interest from many others as well. The majority of people I talked with and interviewed are interested in working together with other members of the community and have asked how they can get on board in helping with this project.

Additional ideas that I have had would be to host a large event with every program/service attending. At this event the program or service could have a small booth, demonstrations, free trials and information packages. I was thinking it could be advertised and open to families and children to attend, or even get the schools involved and have their classes attend the day at different intervals.

Other ideas that may be helpful to reach the outcomes of the overall Community Action Initiative, is continuing to encourage and support the continuation and completion of the Skate Park. Investigating the possibilities of creating and introducing new programs and services that other communities have benefitted from, such as the Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada Program and the YMCA-YWCA into our local areas would be worthwhile.

Monitoring future census information and BC Stats will show any changes in Greater Trail, specifically looking at current levels of income assistance, employment statistics, education levels, current crime levels, drug offenses/charges, and numbers of children and youth at risk. Also getting the programs/services current up to date stats about levels of participation will show if there has been an increase in numbers. Talking with the principals, teachers and councillors of these boys in the future compared to now will give a good idea of their levels of connection in the community.

With a little bit of hard work, a dedicated coordinator and a group effort of all aspects of our community, parents, volunteers, service providers and the City of Trail included, I believe the outcomes of connecting the boys in our community can and will easily be achieved.