

S U M M E R 2 0 1 5

VYPER

VALLEY YOUTH PARTNERSHIP FOR ENGAGEMENT AND RESPECT
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



Quote Corner

“When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down ‘happy.’ They told me I didn’t understand the assignment, and I told them they didn’t understand life.”

-John Lennon

VYPERENCE 2015

Written by Alice (Fraser South Youth)

At VYPERence this year we had many faces join us, including almost everyone from last year. There were many workshops and presenters this year; some of the workshops were: ‘Get VYPED’ (youth-developed), ‘Beyond Bullying,’ ‘Call out: Sharing our stories,’ ‘Social Work and CYC,’ ‘Trades,’ ‘Suicide Prevention,’ ‘Gambling Prevention,’ and many more. During our area meetings before the VYPERence, we discussed potential topics and chose 3 or 4 to focus on while preparing for the conference. We only had 3 days for our VYPERence so we had to make it all work in a small time frame.

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CORE VALUES – Embracing diversity & enjoying life

Growing relationships in an environment of trust, compassion, and understanding.

Creating an open forum for honest and respectful dialogue and discussion among youth and adults.

Strengthening connections in the community through collaboration with service providers and youth.

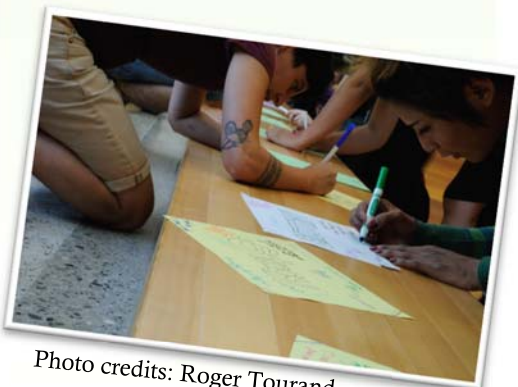


Photo credits: Roger Tourand

Area Updates

Chilliwack, Agassiz & Harrison

Written by VOYCE and Chilliwack VYPER Youth

The Chilliwack youth, now known as VOYCE (Voice Of Youth for Community Engagement), have been working with Sophie (Youth-Adult Partnership Coordinator) on developing a Child and Youth Committee Fraser East Regional Conference. In order to really have youth voice, they reached out to other youth in Abbotsford, Mission, Agassiz, Hope and Boston Bar for feedback and also to participate in presenting some of the workshops. The youth met weekly over the summer to plan the venue, choose workshops and contact presenters. The event was held on October 1st, 2015. Although they were very busy planning the conference, on August 12th, VOYCE held a hotdog sale to celebrate International Youth Day, and also managed to provide feedback to the community regarding youth issues when possible.



Photo credit: Tearsa



Photo credit: Aliyah Gilbert

Written by Agassiz VYPER Youth

In the beginning of July, there was a Real Talk event in Agassiz where youth answered some questions from adults in the community. The youth that were involved with the event felt like they were listened to, that they learned about some services that are in Agassiz but not well known, and also got connected with some of the adults. Some youth were also involved in planning the VYPER conference and provided feedback on what should be there. Four youth from Agassiz attended VYPERence. Those that attended provided feedback throughout the conference and also after the conference. All the youth from Agassiz took with them different things that they learned from the workshops and other youth that were there.

Agassiz has two projects that have received VYPER grant money, one being Youth Programming with Agassiz Harrison Community Services (AHCS) of \$7500, and a mini grant to The Help Project Society of \$500. Youth have been working hard with their respective projects to get them organized and started.

Hope & Boston Bar

Written by Hope & Boston Bar VYPER Youth

Hope & Boston Bar youth are excited for fall and back to school season. iHomework will have their kick off at Hope Secondary School on September 15th, 2015. Read Right is excited for another school year of iHomework.

In Boston Bar, with a \$10,000 VYPER grant - two youth have been selected to pick post secondary schools to visit. These visits are to help youth build relationships with the post secondary schools and their access teams.



Photo credit: Aliyah Gilbert

Area Updates

Fraser North

Written by Jessica (Fraser North Youth)

We in the Fraser North have had a very exciting summer season! We are excited to report that both our Tri-Cities group and our Burnaby/New West group now have new spaces to call home. The Tri-Cities group will now reside in the Offside space at the Port Coquitlam Rec Centre. The Burnaby/New Westminster group was welcomed into the Burnaby Youth Hub space. Now that we've gotten settled and into a new groove, we have been working actively and passionately on brainstorming ideas surrounding a harm reduction project we hope to be able to develop in the coming months.



Photo credit: Roger Tourand

Fraser South

Written by Sarah Jo (Fraser South Area Facilitator)

During the summer, Fraser South youth contributed to discussions around what type of workshops would be held at the VYPERence. One youth also helped to plan the CHEP workshop and co-facilitated the session with VYPER's Fraser North Area Facilitator. The youth also hired a new Fraser South Area Facilitator and she joined the team starting from day one of VYPERence 2015 (July).



Photo credit: Roger Tourand

The youth have also been writing and editing a workshop titled, "How to Get VYPED," since May 2015. It explores new ways of interacting between youth and adults that emphasizes the importance of collaboration and youth leadership. Fraser South youth were able to debut the workshop to a group of service providers and received great feedback. They also presented it at the Chilliwack Youth Voices Conference on October 1st, 2015. They are planning to present the workshop to service providers across Fraser South.

So long message from FS's 1st Area Facilitator, LJ Slovin:

"Working with VYPER has been a wild ride! I feel honoured to have been a part of this project, and I'm excited for all of the spectacular work that is unfolding across the valley. I have learned so much from the incredible VYPER team of youth and adults as well as our community partners. I'm looking forward to sharing all of that knowledge and all of our VYPERisms when I head back to school. It's time to get VYPED everybody!"

We Have a Logo!



Written by Katie Kothlow (Fraser South Youth)

Youth from different communities shared their own visions of what they felt represents VYPER with their area facilitator who passed it onto a graphic designer. Not surprisingly, the different areas came up with similar representations to capture the essence and impact of VYPER. The area facilitators shared the youth's ideas with Pebbles, VYPER's designer, who turned our ideas into reality. We were extremely amazed with the logo options we received from Pebbles at one of our Spring regional meetings. It was great to see what had grown from our ideas. We had a vote and gave feedback on each option to Pebbles who was at the meeting. Pebbles took that feedback, worked with it, then presented us with two almost-finished logo options at VYPERence this summer. We all voted and decided on the one we liked best; the one that represented who we are and who we aim to be. The logo that won shows a purple tree (purple being gender neutral) that has grown full and prosperous with a lot of life (and some different coloured leaves since we are not all the same) with long roots with our name in them (strength and sustainability shown through the hard work of the VYPER team). A silhouette of young people stands in front, linked together like an unbreakable chain.

At the VYPERence, Pebbles also shared different possible page layouts for the website. Pebbles is currently redesigning the whole layout to better represent the project. The website will also feature an interactive map of the Fraser Valley that shows many VYPER-related projects and activities. Everyone voted for the page layouts too, so keep an eye out for the one that got the most votes! Check it out!!!

VYPERence 2015 continued...

Some of us had to miss a few workshops. We got to grow as a group and a community to learn how to better the lives of youth and create different ideas on how we can strengthen the bonds and relationships between adults and youth. At VYPERence this year, we also voted on our new logo, which is mentioned in the article “We have a logo!”

One big event during the VYPERence was our “Real Talk” workshop. Service providers from across the Fraser Valley came to listen to youth answer questions about mental health and substance use. Adults were there to listen to youth voices and experiences and had submitted questions before the event.

Workshops were not the only thing we did; we did many relaxing things as well. When we had to choose which workshops we wanted to float around, we also had a choice to hang out and relax in a space called our ‘Chill Time’ (an option if we chose not to go to any of the workshops at that current time). Chill time included making art, reading a book, and hanging around the Chilliwack RCMP base. Some of us even all sang and jammed together. Youth brought things from guitars to nail polish. This also gave us a lot of time to connect with everyone who came and make new friends. At one point in the VYPERence, we also got a chance to go to the river and skip rocks. It was nice and refreshing for all of us.

The VYPERence was a huge success! We all thought it ended too soon. As the VYPERence came closer to an end, Stacy’s wife also visited and held Yoga for all of us. Yoga was quite successful and several of the youth enjoyed the great stretches. During our brilliant stay, we also got amazing food, provided by the RCMP base. Scheduled meal times happened and we all had to dress in code, to be able to join the feast, out of respect. We had our final meet up which made everyone tear up. This summer’s VYPERence was a huge success and now we hope for another year!

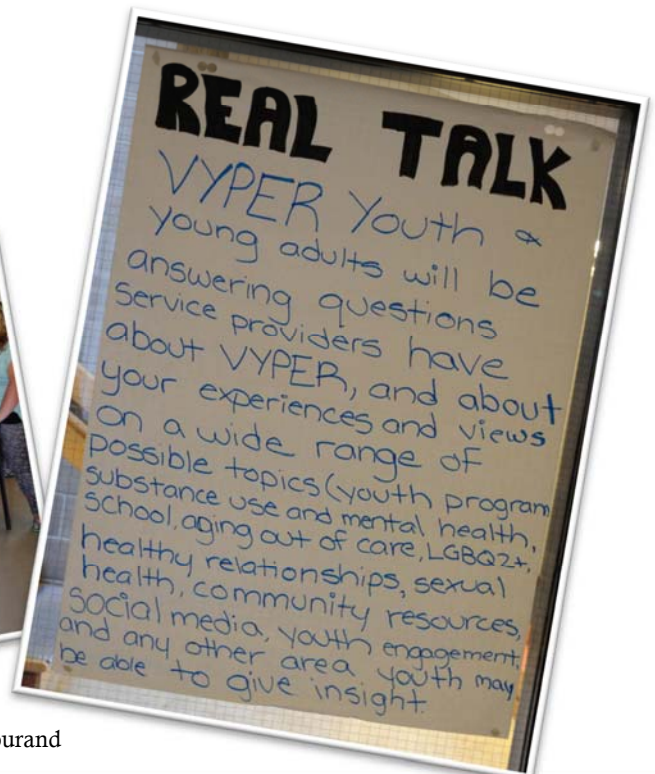


Photo credits: Roger Tourand

Are You VYPE'd Yet?

Check out the list of VYPER's Youth-Adult Partnership Grant Recipients to date:

- Share Family & Community Services
- Read Right Society
- Impact Youth & Family Substance Use Services
- Hope & Area Transition Society (project in Boston Bar)
- District of Mission
- Bakerview Centre for Learning
- Chilliwack Society for Community Living
- Purpose Society
- YouthCo HIV & Hep C Society
- Agassiz & Harrison Community Services
- Alexandra Neighbourhood House
- Pacific Community Resources Society

Thank You for Reading!



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