

The Critical Backbone: Mid Year Update to Council

Presentation for Oxford County Council

June 14, 2023



Social Planning Council Oxford
www.spcoxford.ca



Who We Are

- Community-based non-profit
- Exist to build and strengthen our community: “Every resident experiences wellbeing and a sense of belonging”
- Our Mission:

SPCO illuminates the realities of poverty and marginalization to **shift understanding** and **inspire collaborative action** for positive change.



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Transportation

Process:

- Through Reducing Poverty Together committee identified a need for reduced City of Woodstock bus fares
- Worked with collective to determine key points, establish background research on other municipalities and current state

Outputs:

- Wrote a letter with research to Council for consideration; Council instructed City staff to investigate further
- Based on investigation, Council implemented a reduced bus fare of 50% of the rate for people living in poverty under the Fare Program



Transportation

Outcomes:

- Up to \$30,000 per year in subsidies are available to people accessing the FAIR program for bus passes at 50% of the cost
- Partners assisting in building awareness of this program

Impact:

- It is anticipated that those who utilize the program will have increased access to social activities, appointments, employment, and shopping in the community



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Tenants Rights/Displacement

Process:

- Did interviews with community members to hear and understand how people become displaced
- Formed a committee of volunteers to develop a program related to tenant rights based on community needs and gaps

Outputs:

- 1 of 4 communities in Ontario participating
- Completed 20 stories of displacement; many people hesitant to share their story
- 6 volunteers with lived experienced created a peer program related to tenants rights that will be launched shortly



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Tenants Rights/Displacement

Outcomes:

- Awareness raising; advocacy about financialization of housing
- Peer volunteers trained, built capacity/skills
- Those who engage with the peer program will feel heard and pointed in the direction of legally sound information and community resources

Impact:

- Potential for shift in mindsets related to the housing crisis and to policy change
- Increased awareness of tenants rights and tenants feeling empowered (potential eviction prevention)



Communities Building Youth Futures

Process:

- Youth Council worked with the Town of Tillsonburg and the Oxford County Library to research and develop a youth social space
- Youth Employment and Education Fund was established to help youth with removing some financial barriers to achieving their goals; could receive up to \$500

Outputs:

- Youth social space was launched May 18 (every Thursday) with 23 youth community members attending across the first three weeks
- 38 people received financial assistance from October 2022 until March 2023; funded items included computers/phones, food assistance, program supplies, application fees (universities/GED)



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Communities Building Youth Futures

Outcomes:

- Those who attended youth social space to date have had discussions during programming with staff and each other around post-secondary paths, career exploration, bullying, and mental health
- Immediate financial barriers were removed for those who received the Youth Employment and Education funds
- Themes from Youth Employment and Education Fund were taken to appropriate groups for system change considerations

Impact:

- We anticipate that youth who attend the social space feel that they belong in their community and that they develop positive relationships
- Youth who received funds were able to get to the next step in their journey e.g.: attend, apply, access school or work



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The Rest of 2023

- Launch of peer education/tenants rights program
- Release of report on stories of displacement across Ontario
- Launch Calls to Action for housing

- Develop and share Calls to Action for youth success, belonging and inclusion
- Continue mental health trainings and social space pilot

- SPCO Growth Strategy/strategic plan



You Are Invited

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Discover what we've been involved
with over the last year and what is
still to come!

JUNE 20, 2023
4:00-5:30PM

UNIFOR LOCAL 636
126 Beale Street
Woodstock

REGISTER
BY JUNE 16, 2023



Thank you!

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